

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
A2 272
v. 3

ALEXENA;

OR, THE

Castle of Santa Marco.

A ROMANCE,

IN THREE VOLUMES.



ALEXENA;

OR, THE

Castle of Santa Marco,

A ROMANCE,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

EMBELLISHED WITH ENGRAVINGS.

“Ye gods of quiet and of sleep profound!
Whose soft dominion o’er this castle sways;
And all the widely silent places round.
Forgive me, if my trembling pen displays
What never yet was sung in mortal lays.”

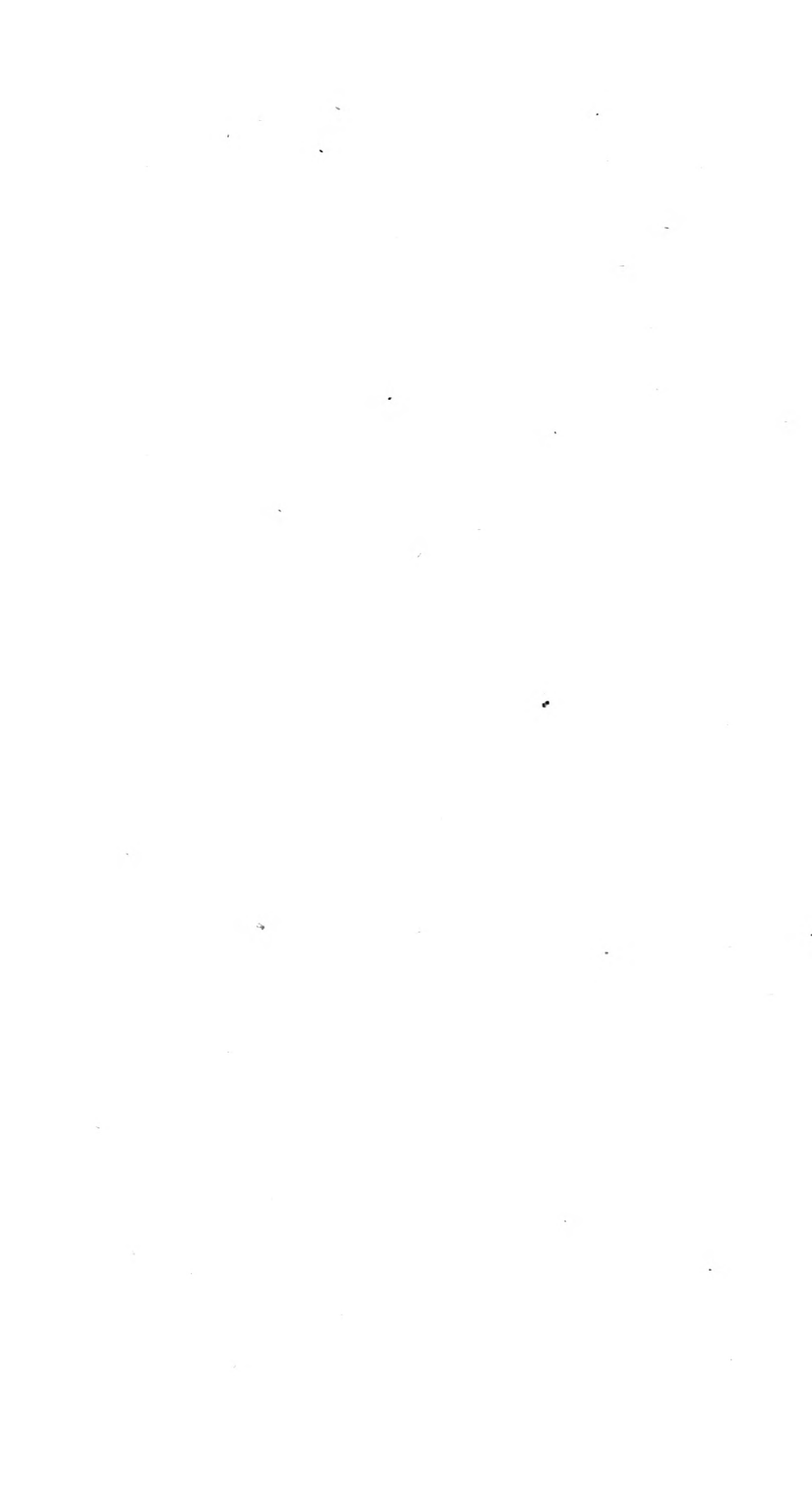
VOL. III.

London:

Printed at the Minerva Press, for

A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-ST.

1817.



ALEXENA;

OR THE

Castle of Santa Marco.



CHAPTER I.

“ O ! bid me leap —————
From off the battlements of yonder tower ;
Or chain me to some steepy mountain’s top,
Where roaring bears and savage lions roam ;
Or shut me nightly in a carnal-house,
O’er-covered quite with dead men’s rattling bones,
With reeky shanks, and yellow chapless skulls ;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud ;
Things, that to hear them told, have made me tremble ;
And I will do it, without fear or doubt,
To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.”

ROM. & JUL.

WHILE Montano and his unfortunate servant were pursuing Louisa through the deserted chambers of the castle, Alexena lay senseless in the

armoury, until Carracci sent Clarissa to her assistance, who found her so ill, that she was obliged to call on the chieftain, and beg he would bear her to her apartment. He was then endeavouring to sooth Louisa, who had been safely conveyed by him into a subterranean chamber, and was almost inconsolable, in consequence of being separated from our heroine; but, on hearing her melancholy situation, she resolved to brave every peril, and see her once again before their final separation, though Belzo positively swore he never would allow her to return; therefore, it was not without many tears, and the earnest entreaties of Clarissa, that he suffered her to accompany him; but having, at length, assented, he first despatched Monfrane to watch the monk, and prevent him from burying Hugo in the cemetery.

When Alexena regained her mental powers, she found herself in the arms of the robber, who bore her swiftly along, through many secret

pathways ; but where they led, she was unable to demand, yet felt little uneasiness, when she saw her friends on each side of her. Carracci was pleased by the silence she observed, as it seemed to say she confidently relied on his honour ; and when extreme weakness compelled her to rest her head on his bosom, it thrilled with delight. Mortimer was envied for an instant ; yet Carracci became more seriously interested for his welfare than ever ; and as to Alexena—woe betide those who dare breathe her name with disrespect ! as the grave alone could hide them from his vengeance. His every thought was so devoted to her service, that his eyes beamed with such excessive brightness, that their lightnings served for torches to guide him on his way ; and had he been attacked while she rested on his shoulder, they would have blighted the forms of his enemies—scorched them to the very bones—withered their

strength, and overwhelmed them with confusion. You might

“ — Ken the manner of his gait ;
— He rises on his toe : that spirit of his
In aspiration lifts him from the earth,”

as he moves forward with his lovely burthen, who, in a few moments, he placed in a chair in her own apartment, where every thing remained in the same situation in which she had left it. Clarissa was now obliged to say that Louisa could not remain with her any longer, as her life had been proscribed, and would certainly fall a sacrifice to the unrelenting barbarity of either Acasto or the monk, if she was not immediately removed to a place of safety. This was sad tidings ; but Alexena loved her friend too sincerely to entertain one selfish wish ; on the contrary, being assured of the necessity of the measure, she insisted on its instant execution, though the separation should prove a death-blow to her peace.

Carracci admired the fortitude, the patience, with which she supported this painful trial, and blessed her, as he retired into an adjoining chamber, where he waited until such time as Clarissa and Louisa had assisted her to undress, and when they again joined him, he was delighted to find she had been soothed by their promises of meeting her, at least, once every other day, and oftener, if possible.

While they pursued the frightful path which led to the cavern, whose horrors Louisa had yet to encounter, she asked numberless questions respecting Lord Mortimer, who, she was dreadfully shocked to hear, had been dangerously ill for the last fortnight, and was only then slowly recovering. Agitation, and the unwholesome air of the subterraneans, had undermined his health, and almost reduced him to the last extremity ; but, father Zelo's skill, aided by a naturally good constitution, with the unremitting attention of his friends and domestics, subdued the

disease, and promised to restore health and happiness; as Belzo had been in Rome, where his mission was crowned with success, and promised joy and felicity to all those, about whose welfare our readers may in any wise be interested.

Let us now return to Montano, who we left tortured by all the pangs which rend a guilty soul. On regaining his chamber, he cursed his misfortune, until early dawn, and then rose for the purpose of seeking Don Philip, who he was surprised to find already dressed. Much astonished, he entreated to know the meaning of such an unusual circumstance, and was almost petrified, on being informed, that a courier from Italy, had brought in the course of the night, a letter from one of Don Philip's trusty agents, which stated, that an accurate and true account of all their recent transactions were laid before the Inquisition, by the pontiff himself, with strict injunctions to the holy tribunal, to bring the perpetra-

tors to immediate punishment; "and you see," continued Acasto, "that you are the first on the list; and not a single soldier or domestic have escaped the proscription."

"Since we are so unfortunate," said Montano, "it is better that all are included, as it will convince them, nothing but a desperate resistance can ensure their safety."

"I am inclined to think," observed Don Philip, "that there is at least one traitor in the castle; yet, who in my household can it be: all are named, except Margaret, and she has not the power to do mischief, even if she had the inclination."

"Let me see the list," anxiously demanded the monk, "as you may have overlooked it rather negligently."

Acasto placed it in his hands, and he having read it with great attention, after a thoughtful pause, said, "there are three names not written here, but to one only can suspicion attach."

"Name the three," demanded Don

Philip, "that I may exterminate them."

"Fernandez, Larco, and Williams, the English seaman."

"On the fidelity of the two first I will stake my existence, but as to the other, the succeeding hour shall be his last; and the two former must be imprisoned, until I hear from Rome."

"Father Ambrose can easily satisfy you," replied the monk; "I know him well; he is in the confidence of the chief inquisitors, besides being a member; therefore, you are most fortunate in having such a friend."

"That is not what interests me at present," he pettishly muttered, "go instantly, tell Fernandez to seize Williams, and order all the soldiers and domestics to attend in the great hall at noon, as I then mean to read this letter, and shew them the greatness of their danger."

"I do not approve of those precipitate measures," said Montano, "and if I may offer my advice, you will not

persist in such an intention, as the consequence will be obviously this ;—the fears of the inquisitorial tortures may induce many to endeavour to escape, and should this happen, the consternation will become general, and it is likely, will end in mutiny, if not in murder.”

While they yet remained undetermined how to act, a second courier arrived, whose information almost drove Don Philip distracted. The king had discovered the falsehood of his accusation against Don Miguel, and in consequence thereof, set an enormous price on his head ; he had also been publicly impeached by Henri Count Bolerno, as a murderer and outlaw, and with having imprisoned Alexena de Guzman, for the iniquitous purpose of compelling her to receive his hand ; in which numerous offences, he was aided and assisted by one Montano, a monk of the Dominican order, who had recently been tried in effigy, found guilty, and burnt, for sacrilegiously robbing the

monastery of his order ; and further, that the said monk did commit murder, in the presence of the said Henri, in the court-yard of the Castle of Santa Marco, and the soldiery of Don Philip in the passes of the Pyrenees.

“ What say you to all this ? ” said Acasto, when he had finished, “ Did I not read it distinctly ? ”

“ Oh ! plain enough ; but the quere is, how shall we escape the joint vengeance of the king and inquisition ? ”

“ There is no safety in the neighbouring kingdoms, not even in England, nor in France, as the power of his holiness is acknowledged every where.”

“ Then,” exclaimed Montano, “ here we shall stand the hazard of the die, and perish rather than yield ; but, it were well this Alexena was your wife, as if she could once be induced to acknowledge you as her husband, the Guzman family would save you on their own account, and, probably, by their unbounded influence, hush this business altogether.”

“ Confounded ass that I am ! I would never have thought of that.—Yes, yes ! Alexena, thou shalt be mine, and save the life and fortune of Acasto.”

“ I hope Louisa is safe,” said Montano, interrupting him, “ as she will be demanded at our hands ; therefore, if Hugo missed her, all is well.”

“ Let instant search be made, and if found, she shall not behold heaven’s light, until you bestow the nuptial blessing on Alexena and myself.”

The monk now heartily despised Acasto for his versatility, as one moment he was sad, and ready to expire in despair ; the next almost frantic with joy, about that which it was possible might never happen ; and while he gave orders to Torquo, to have the castle carefully examined, the former was devising the most likely means to induce our heroine to submit to this detested marriage. The result of his deliberations were, that Don Philip should use force, unless she consented with a good grace ; and instantly after

advised him to that effect. He readily assented to the necessity of the measure, and desired the monk to try every means, except those by which her life might be endangered ; and that he would be guided by his advice.

“ Then I promise you success ; the proud girl shall willingly be your’s, without suffering any tortures, except a few mental ones, which we could not effect our purpose without resorting to. I shall bring her before you, and unless she is all you can wish, deliver her over to my *government*, and leave the rest to me.”

Thus Montano flattered him with sanguine hopes of speedy success, and instantly after went in pursuit of Alexena, with whom he returned, accompanied by Torquo, who attended to say, that every habitable part of the castle had been investigated, but Louisa could not be found, and must, therefore, have sought shelter in those chambers which had been disused for several years past.

“It is not now material,” said Don Philip; “to-morrow, or in a few days hence, we will seek her there.”

“She may starve in the mean time, or expire in terror,” observed the monk.

“I do not wish to be troubled about her at present, as I have many other things to think of, which are of greater importance; therefore, be so good as to drop the subject.”

“May I request to know what are Don Acasto’s commands?” timidly demanded our heroine, who had been listening to this dialogue.

“May you?—Oh, Lady Alexena, forgive this excessive rudeness; and believe me, I shall feel most unhappy, if I have, even unintentionally, offended; but my mind has been so tortured about that young woman, who had the honour to wait on you this some time, and who has now either thought proper to withdraw from the castle, or secret herself, that I was likely to expire with grief and terror.”

“Oh! yes; very likely; but am I to

understand, I have been brought here merely to have this most unpleasant news communicated in the presence of the wretch who has driven her to the dreadful alternative of ——”

“Of what?” demanded Acasto.

“You must finish the sentence, as I cannot.”

“Well, whether am I to suppose she has escaped in the disguise of a soldier, or leaped from the battlements?”

“Louisa could never entertain a thought of suicide; therefore, I think the former is most likely.”

“And Williams is gone off with her, to conduct her in safety to court.”

“I should be delighted was that really the case, and I sincerely trust you have prophesied the truth, though I am aware what you have already said has been for the purpose of both fretting and insulting me.”

Torquo now entered, and Acasto ordered him to bring up Williams, that he might convince Donna Alexena, her suspicions were groundless respecting

Signiora Louisa's escape ; but was thunderstruck on hearing he could not be found, and that both Larco and Fernandez were also missing.

“ Fly ! ” exclaimed Acasto, who was now outrageous ; “ fly ! and order every court and tower to be searched, and should the fugitives be found, conduct them to the keep instantly. Now, Donna Alexena, hear me : letters from Rome and Madrid, which I received last night, state, that Louisa's brother was in this castle some time ago, and after his liberation, went instantly to his majesty, before whom he laid a statement, in which he accused me of many enormous crimes, which never were committed ; but the consequence is, my life is endangered, and there is no possible means by which I can escape, except by marrying, or sacrificing you ; now, as my personal safety renders one or the other absolutely necessary, I think it best to be thus explicit, and here are the letters, which must remove every doubt of the truth of what I have

stated. From this, you can form an idea of the perils by which I am encompassed, and the utter impossibility that exists, of your having any thing to expect from my clemency, unless you consent to be mine; should you bless me with your hand, my future life shall be devoted to your happiness; if not—oh! drive me not to the cruel alternative; your form, beautiful as it is, must fall beneath the stiletto of an assassin. The existence of every individual beneath these walls, call on me to decide instantly; therefore, in two hours, prepare either to receive my hand, or——the monk will inform you of the rest.”

Don Philip then hurried from the chamber, in order to seek his treacherous domestics, and to assemble his soldiers, on whose fidelity to himself, and incorrigible wickedness towards the rest of mankind, he determined to rely, and in his opinion of them he was not mistaken, for when he informed them of their danger, and his determination to

resist, he was received with loud acclamations. In the mean time, our heroine sat in the chamber in which he had left her, praying for fortitude to support her through the last sad scene, as she had already resolved to die rather than marry him; and while in this state of mental torture, Montano frequently passed through the chamber, to observe, whether Don Philip had any thing to expect, and was surprised to find her quite calm and collected, though she refused to answer his questions, or even drop a sentence, from which he might form an idea of her resolution; but the two hours having expired, Acasto re-appeared, and on his entrance, begged to know her final determination. Our heroine then rose, and with a firmness which surprised both him and the monk, said, “she was resigned to her cruel and undeserved fate, yet freely forgave him, and all her other enemies; requesting, if she was to die, that she might not be insulted in her last moments, and relied, that the

manner of it would be as speedy, and with as little pain, as possible.

Acasto beheld her with admiration, bordering on pity, but on finding his hopes blasted by her resignation, he burst into a violent fit of rage, and exclaimed, "Infatuated woman! from Montano only can you expect clemency; my oath, my honour, is pledged to my soldiers, who with me have openly bid defiance to the king and holy tribunal; but, lest we should be defeated, I have pledged myself, to remove every living witness who can injure us. Believe me, my heart never sustained so severe a trial as it has done within this last hour; your obstinacy has now removed every shadow of future comfort of your life. I cannot save you; but this your last request shall be attended to.—Montano, let her die by the sword, dagger, poison, or suffocation; which ever fancy may point out as the gentlest method of destruction; humanity forbids me to say more;—Alexena, farewell! and may

angels waft you on celestial wings to paradise."

"One word more, Don Philip; stay, I conjure you," faltered our heroine. "Should Lord Mortimer ever become your prisoner, save and send him to his own country, and I will pray for you with my latest breath."

"May lightnings—no, never—he dies by this hand, if ever in my power; but, repent—say you are mine, and let him live, for——"

"Enough! Don Acasto. Father, lead on; I am ready to brave your most cruel torments; for as promises are but wind, I much fear you will not lose this opportunity of feasting your eyes on the agonized form of the affianced wife of that Mortimer, who defies your malice, and will, as sure as justice reigns in heaven, punish you."

"When ladies are feverish, bleeding, I understand, relieves them," replied the monk; "and as you seem unwell, it is my intention to try the experiment."

Acasto now rushed from the cham-

her, while the former stamped on the floor, and was instantly attended by Torquo, and two savage ruffians, who he ordered to bind Alexena, and convey her to the western tower.”

“There is no necessity for rudeness; signiors, I will walk there, and submit without a murmur, or offering the slightest resistance.” The men now appeared unwilling to obey; while the monk having observed their expressive looks, and conceiving her beauty and innocence might induce them to save her, ordered them to follow him, but to wait without, and be in readiness, should he require their assistance. Torquo had, by this time, bound the fair hands of his victim behind, and having thrown a veil over her, led the way to the fatal prison, which she had scarce entered, before Montano placed her on a bench, at the same time saying, “it was his intention, notwithstanding all her ill treatment, to give her the choice mentioned by Don Philip.” Our heroine gazed wildly round; there

—was no friend nigh; and Acasto had really given orders for her execution. Death hovered over her; there was no means of escape; no tears could move the obdurate Montano, who, on finding she would not make a choice, bound one of her arms, which he uncovered; yet, for a moment, its snowy whiteness delayed his purpose; it felt so soft, was so elegantly formed, so round, so beautiful—but it was Alexena's.—The monster frowned, and prepared a lancet, while he said, “Lady, commend yourself to heaven, for you have only a few moments to live; as, being young, your blood will flow quickly; and, I suppose, it is unnecessary to say, I shall drain those veins of their last drop—Torquo, hold her.”

“I repeat it is unnecessary,” she replied; “I am resigned.”

Torquo retired behind the monk, who had taken Alexena's hand, and while he raised the instrument of death, observed—“The point of this is poisoned; a touch ensures destruction.

One moment is yet allowed ; will you marry Acasto ? or shall I ——.” She heard him not ; her eyes were rivetted to the form of Carracci, who stood in a breach formed in the wall, and was at that instant, by his gestures, meditating the most direful vengeance. He gnashed his teeth, shook his mailed arm, and when the monk raised his, with the intention of perpetrating his horrible purpose, the former stamped his foot with such violence, that the chamber shook, and before either Montano or his assistant could ascertain the cause, the floor fell from beneath their feet, and they were precipitated, with dreadful violence, into an apartment below, from which their groans ascended, giving a convincing proof that they had not fallen into a bed of down. The boards instantly resumed their former position, and then Carracci advanced into the room, and while he unbound our heroine, said, “ Fear nothing ; I am always watchful of your safety ; and, if it please God, a very

few days shall expire before I restore you to liberty and your friends, many of whom have already arrived, and are in my cavern ; but as it is incumbent on me to be absent for a short time, I request you will not irritate Acasto by a steady refusal of his hand, and before it is possible for him to resort again to harsh measures, his power shall end for ever."

" Oh ! why not save me now ?" she exclaimed ; " why not restore me to the arms of my Louisa ?"

" Believe me, I would most willingly ; but the attempt would be attended by destruction ; for if the castle was too minutely examined, all our private paths would be discovered ; and there are other reasons which I have not time to explain. So, may heaven bless you ! —Farewel !"

He now disappeared ; and the soldiers who waited without having become impatient, knocked at the door, and were admitted by Alexena, who, on entering, were surprised to find her

alone; but became terrified, on observing the chamber had but the one door, through which they had entered, and that Montano could not have passed through that without their knowledge.

“Lady,” said one of the men, in a stammering voice, “may I ask what has become of the monk and Torquo?” A deep groan now rolled along the walls, which encreased their terror, while Alexena replied—“Heaven, in its mercy to me, snatched them from this room, the floor of which has opened, and they have fallen, I know not whither.”

“Into a lake of brimstone, I fear,” observed Pedrillo; “and that is the end Bill Williams has prophesied for both, an hundred times.”

“Where is that good creature?” inquired our heroine.

“We do not know, lady; but it is suspected, he, Fernandez, and Larco, have gone off together in the Brigantine, as she has been missed from her usual anchorage.”

“ Have they been pursued ?”

“ No ; that was impossible, as Don Philip has but one other vessel, which is many leagues from this, and it was in her that you were conveyed from Bayonne.”

“ I trust,” continued Alexena, “ that his escape is unquestionable, as he is a kind, good-natured fellow.”

“ That he is, lady, and brave as a lion ; but what are your commands ? shall we relate what we have heard to Don Acasto ? if we do, he will order this floor to be torn up in search of the father.”

“ Oh, certainly !” she replied, “ and I am reprehensible for detaining you so long, when the wretched man may require your assistance.”

“ Reprehensible !—oh ! the virgin will forgive you that offence ; as it is not clear to us, but he has had orders to murder you.”

“ And did you not know it ?” she demanded.

“ Know it ! exclaimed Launcelot—
“ Saint Jago forbid ! I never was
backward in cutting throats in a battle ;
but am not altogether so great a scoundrel as to turn assassin, and murder women. If that was Montano’s errand here, I hope he will never grope his way into the world again ; and for my own part, I shall not serve such masters an hour longer, if I can help it.”

“ Nor I, neither,” said Pedrillo ;
“ and may a plague rot them all.”

They now left the apartment, and went in search of Margaret, who they promised to send to our heroine as soon as possible.

CHAP. II.

" ——— If thou didst but consent
To this most cruel act, do but despair ;
And, if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread
That ever spider twisted from her womb
Will serve to strangle thee ; a rush will be
A beam to hang thee on ; or, would'st thou drown
thyself,
Put but a little water in a spoon,
And it shall be as the ocean,
Enough to stifle such a villain up."

KING JOHN.

WHILE Montano was tormenting our heroine, Acasto was busily employed searching for Louisa, who he was most anxious to discover, as if he had her again in his power, he made no doubt but Alexena would consent, rather than allow her to be poisoned, which it was his intention to threaten to do, unless the former gave him her hand. He had, by this time, given over the idea of being able to seize Fernandez or his companions ; therefore, his search was entirely confined to the former, who he every moment expected to find

in some desolate chamber; but his labours ended in disappointment, and he was about to give up the fruitless attempt, when the moans of some persons in distress excited his attention; having ascertained from whence they proceeded, he ordered the door of an adjacent cell, which light had never visited, to be burst open, and then discovered Montano and Torquo lying on the floor, almost senseless from cold and loss of blood. Astonished beyond measure at this extraordinary circumstance, he assisted them to the hall, from which they were removed to their chambers, extremely ill; and several hours elapsed before either could satisfy his impatient curiosity. On hearing what had occurred, Alexena was examined as to her knowledge of the event; but avoided an explanation, by saying that a messenger of an All-seeing Providence had thus punished them for their wanton cruelty.

The monk received instructions not to inflict any bodily torture on the

person of our heroine ; but by every ingenious art, to work upon her fears, and although he, heretofore, felt an unnatural pleasure in tormenting, it never was his intention to destroy her ; but Hugo's death, and the bruises which he had received in his fall from her chamber, wound his debased mind to a state of savage ferocity, beyond idea brutal, and he then impatiently looked forward to the hour when renovated strength would enable him to wreak his vengeance on her. In a week he was able to walk on the ramparts, and in less than a fortnight had our heroine once more under his tutorage, who, after suffering innumerable insults from his barbarous treatment, was, at length, condemned to be chained in one of the most gloomy dungeons, and starved, until such time as her stubborn spirit should yield to Acasto's wishes ; and scarce had this horrible sentence been pronounced, ere the monk carried it into execution. It would be tedious to enumerate all the arguments Don

Philip used to persuade her to abandon her lover's hopeless cause ; but let it suffice, she was immovable, and was, in consequence, borne by Montano into the most frightful of the subterranean prisons known to him, and as he passed through the windings of the vaulty avenues which led to them, he taunted Alexena with every expression likely to add to her mental sufferings. " I bear you," said he, " to a rocky couch, where a stone shall be your pillow, and chains your only covering ; there, in gloomy dampness, you may feast on reflection, and when your lips are parched with thirst, lick the mothy dew off the clammy walls; but it is possible, if you call loud enough, Mortimer will hasten to your assistance, and, assuming some seraphic shape, bear you through the regions of the air, to his native clime, where you will become a convert to that monstrous doctrine which again spreads her demoniac wings round his devoted land ; for know--its guardian angel,

Mary, the queen, sleeps with her fathers."

The monk had now reached a flight of stone stairs, which terminated in a low, but spacious cavern, and in it, at regular distances, there were small, square doors, through which, cries and groans of anguish, accompanied by the clanking of chains, were distinctly heard.

"Are not those sounds delightful?" demanded Montano.—"Do they not raise your drooping spirits?—Oh! they certainly must; and, to prove how sincerely I wish to make you comfortable, you shall have an adjoining chamber.—Look here!—what think you of this?"

The inhuman villain now dragged her into a loathsome vault, in which there was a miserable flock bed, half rotted by damp, and nigh devoured by vermin, with a small table, whereon some meat and bread was already placed; a rocky bench served for a chair, and to it were fastened several

massy iron chains. Montano raised his lamp, that she might, at one view, see all its horrors, then set it down, and prepared to chain her to the wall. Her courage now wavered; twice she was about to demand liberty on his own terms; but the visions of fancy presented the trembling shade of Lord Mortimer, which seemed to upbraid her with inconstancy, and not being able to bear the torturing picture, she, with a sigh, presented her beauteous hands to the monk, who instantly loaded them with fetters; while, with a demoniac grin, he observed, they were charming wedding bracelets. "You yet want the zone of brilliants," he continued; "but here they are;" then encircled her waist with a strong, though light chain. "By my beads, you look killingly lovely, and a bold adventurous knight seeing you thus, could not do less than raise the castle from its foundations, for sheltering such an instrument of cruelty as myself; but that you may have some food for the mind

in this solitude, observe me :”—He now drew forth from his bosom, a small box of powder, which he shook over the viands on the table, and rubbed it on them with his hands.—“ This powder is a deadly drug, endowed with the singular property of giving lengthened and exquisite tortures to those who may be obliged to taste it. Its smell is pleasant, and invites the appetite ; but beware—you know its baleful influence, and if you eat of those provisions, you can only blame yourself for the consequences.”

“ Wretched man, heaven forgive you !” said Alexena, as the monk withdrew ;” but he having heard her, turned on his heel, and in a pathetic voice murmured :

“ Lovely mourner, dearest damsel of this cave, farewell !” The massive door now clashed after him, and shut our poor heroine within its doleful prison, deprived of light—of food—of every comfort ; chained in darkness—toads

her companions, and the groans of fellow-sufferers, her only means of judging she was in the vicinity of human creatures. Where then was Carracci, or Mortimer, or Williams, or Louisa, or any of her friends? were they all ignorant of her melancholy fate? Alas! the succeeding hours too clearly prove they were. When nature at length demanded nourishment, she found the terrors of her situation encrease; there was nothing to appease its clamorous cravings, but the poisoned viands, or the black and venomous reptiles, whose glaring eyes were the only lights which shone on the humid walls of her dungeon; every succeeding minute encreased the pangs of hunger, and with frantic screams she vainly endeavoured to recal the obdurate monk; echo mocked her with the repetition of her cries, but none came to her assistance; she rattled her bonds, that their clanking might fright the horrors of solitude, and by repeated exertions of this description, she became so much

fatigued, that sleep promised to snatch her for a few hours from misery ; but, again unkind fate wreaked her with frightful dreams, and the cold paws of a monstroustoad, whose eyes, to her imagination, blazed brighter than torches, awoke her out of one scene of despair, to plunge her into a still more frightful one. She shrunk from the noxious animal, and with the chain, pushed it from the door of its rude habitation, which lay behind the rock, that the moment before had supported her head. Hunger inflicted the most direful pangs, and reduced her to the dreadful alternative of choosing poison, rather than suffer any longer, but on attempting to reach the table, the chain was too short, and she could not touch it. At this moment of despair, Montano entered with an olio, whose savory smell was sufficient to invite a languid appetite ; but, Alexena's was not of that description ; yet, she had scarce tasted it, ere a hollow voice, which seemed to issue from the rocky ceiling of the dungeon,

commanded her not to feast on that which was thickened with the blood of her murdered friend, Louisa. The monk started. Our heroine turned deadly pale, and the accursed dish would have fallen from her hands, had it not been timely prevented ; while she, sickening at the idea of having tasted two or three morsels, turned away in horror and disgust, which completed the wishes of her vile tormentor. Thus, her want of reflection again caused her innumerable sufferings ; for had she not seen her cousin safe under Carracci's protection, there might be just grounds for attending to the late mysterious caution ; but the agitation of her mind concealed its glaring falsehood, and the mere mention of such a circumstance deprived her of every wish to eat, which her brutal gaoler no sooner observed, than he stamped his foot, and Torquo entered with a long iron instrument, formed like a hand-vice, in which he threatened to

squeeze her jaws to pieces, if she did not instantly swallow the food he had provided.

“ It is not made of blood,” he gruffly muttered, “ nor any thing filthy ; therefore, partake of it quickly.” She refused, and Acasto’s steward advanced with the terrible machine.

“ Oh ! I will do as you require,” exclaimed our heroine.”

“ Well, despatch ; for I have yet much business to attend to.”

She took the food ; looked at it ; but ; revolting nature forbade her to taste, and the tears which fell from her pale cheeks evinced her encreasing disgust. Montano, having now become impatient, grasped and shook her, while she dropped on her knees, and with uplifted hands, besought him not to force her inclination.

“ Give me the iron,” he vociferated, “ and I’ll try to coax her appetite.”

“ Oh, heaven !—let me go ;—I will eat.”

Again it was placed before her ; and,

with deep sighs, which the cold perspiration that trembled on her brow proved the pain of, she forced down a few mouthfuls, then faltered—"I can eat no more; you may kill me, if you will."

"Finish it every morsel, or I will inflict horrible tortures.—Here, Torquo, put out her eyes."

The old villain drew forth a clasp-knife, and prepared to execute the savage order, and again Alexena shrieked—"I will!—I will!" and was about to comply with the monk's cruel mandate, when the food was dashed from her hand by a reeking scull, which fell at Torquo's feet. Montano saw, and turned to leave the prison; but had not power to move, until he was stunned by a blow on the head, from another that was more frightful than the first, and with difficulty escaped a third, which wrung against the door the moment it had closed after him. In his fright he forgot one of the lamps, and it served to shew our distressed and

terrified heroine a most frightful creature, similar to that which had saved Louisa from Acasto's dagger. In one hand it brandished a wrenching-iron, while in the other it held a human head, and, on observing Alexena, laughed horribly, then, with a blow, broke the chain which bound her to the rock, and scampered back into the gloomy recess. She beheld this strange creature with infinite terror, yet had not power to speak, though she felt confident the form was real; but, being now at liberty to examine her dungeon, she lifted the lamp, and in a very few minutes after began to explore it, having first gathered up the chain that remained about her waist, and rolled her handkerchief round those that confined her wrists, to prevent their clanking. Thus prepared, she wandered into the savage windings of the cavern, and having, in a short time, reached a vast number of rocks, which were so close together that there was scarce room to pass, she paused; but proceeded on

finding they constituted a part of the cave, and seemed to support it in many places, while their projections formed doorways and uncouth arcades of a most gloomy and terrifying description; yet she fearlessly proceeded, and after passing innumerable turnings, saw the faint reflection of a distant light. Hopes of escape lent her speed and strength to encounter many rude masses of rock over which she ventured; and, at length, having peeped from behind the projection of one, discovered a large vase of oil burning on the ground, and a crescent hanging from the vaulty ceiling, which distinctly served to show the horrors of the place. A savage creature sat on a coffin quite close to the lamp, with a scull between its legs, on which it beat time to a melancholy, mournful tune; presently it stopped, and took up this extraordinary musical instrument, which it smelt, then grinned, laughed, and tossed it back and forward; sometimes bursting into violent fits of rage, dashing the bones

about, and yelling most hideously. The form of this unfortunate creature was encompassed with part of a heavy chain, which it rattled, and shook with vain efforts to disengage the festering iron from its almost naked body; and while our heroine yet observed this sad scene, a female approached almost as miserable as the maniac; but who, as her voice was familiar, she beheld with greater terror; yet could not recal to her imagination any one to whose it bore a resemblance. The *perecranium* player received her with much civility, and pulled the coffin into the middle of the dungeon, on which she sat down, and then asked him how he felt, and if Torquo supplied him with a sufficient quantity of food. To this he seemed inattentive, and without noticing her question, offered to relate the story of his late journey into the world.

“ Pray let me hear it ? ”

“ Willingly ; listen then, and pay particular attention. ” —

“ Little Hombracho, with the red shanks, came out of the clouds last night, and broke this chain, and told me I might go forth, for these walls were rotten; then breathed on my face, and said, that would preserve me from infection.”

“ Did you go?” demanded his companion; while she evidently beheld him with pity.

“ Yes, certainly, and saw the most strange things that imagination can form; the world was rotten, and every person in it; all animals were alike, and desolation prevailed universally; the air was unsufferably bad; rivers stood still, and emitted a deadly stench; those that walked in the streets were only half human, their flesh was rotten on their bones, and had there been a breath of wind, it would have blown it away. Curiosity led me into a church, where two lovers were about to be married, and as soon as the ceremony was performed, the husband kissed his wife, but what was the conse-

quence, the flesh fell from the cheeks of both, and they screamed, and detested each other. Neighbours met and shook hands, and this motion of friendly greeting, stript the decayed covering from those members; they then departed, cursing the hour of their birth, until they spit their tongues from their putrid mouths. At length, the sky partook of the general plague, and fell in heavy masses; yet, when it struck the house tops, it caused no noise, and crushed the inhabitants, without their seeming to feel the pains of death. One man got dust in his eyes, and in the attempt to relieve himself from the agony which it inflicted, rubbed these most useful members from their sockets, accompanied by a large portion of the face, then sat down and howled, until another out of compassion knocked him on the head; but the exertion which the latter used, rent his shoulder from his body, making a hideous gash, into which filthy insects crept, and fed

on his vitals, until he died vomiting imprecations. Next came too young men, who had apparently escaped the contagion, running towards each other, but when quite close, I found they had no eyes, and in their darkness, they struck together, instantly a yell announced the painful shock, down came their rattling bones, and they expired fleshless skeletons! I now wandered on into the great square of Madrid, where the holy tribunal held an *aute da fe*, but the fires were rotten, and the criminals walked unhurt through the harmless flames; at this moment, a wind arose, that carried with it millions of putrid smells, adding misery to misery, and contagion to contagion; the storm dashed one man against the other, and house tumbled against house; all fell together, and with screams and curses, became nothing; one was left, he stood nigh me, and I asked the meaning of such universal destruction; but on opening his mouth to answer, I saw the inside

was rotten, and his voice being lost in putridity, I heard him not. The wind now ceased, and I then proceeded to Valladolid; but there the calm was worse than the storm: Steeples fell piece-meal on the heads of the wretches underneath, without having given the slightest indication of such fatality. Long, rank weeds sprung up in the streets, and smothered the inhabitants, who vainly endeavoured to struggle through them. The land was covered with rotten toads and filthy animals; the fountains were either dried up, or thickened by corrupted carcasses that had fallen into their waters, in vain endeavours to quench their burning thirst; and it was there I met Philip, Montano, Torquo, and Hugo, and found those, my old tormentors, a thousand times more abominably rotten than the rest of mankind. Rheum streamed from their eyes, which soon became sightless; pains of every description accompanied their unsoundness. The cold sciatica cramped their

limbs; leprosy, stitches, blains, rheumatism, tooth-ache, fever, ulcers, cancer, and all damned pains, tortured their loathsome forms, while they laughed, with sickening derision, at each other's torments, praying that some more subtle and devouring plague might light on their heads, off which both skin and hair had fallen, while vermin crept forth at their ears, mouth, and at those orifices where eyes had been. I turned from them in disgust, and forgot my late revengeful thoughts; nay, I did pity them. Rage, at length, at each other's abuse, aided by tortures, roused their fury to a pitch exceeding madness, as they groped for each other's shapeless forms; and you would have felt surprised to see how hatred lent them them sight to destroy each other. In a few moments they grasped and buried their fingers in each other's eyeless sockets, and with reiterated shrieks, dashed their skeleton forms on the ground, slipping on the filth that had fallen from them, and

after united struggles, sunk into eternal misery ; while I, affrighted at what I had already seen, returned thither, to play with dead mens' bones, until doomsday."

While the maniac related this horrid and disgusting tale, his female friend did not interrupt him ; but when he had concluded, she exclaimed, in the bitterest accents of woe—

" Alas ! unfortunate Velasco ! to what a pitiable state of derangement have you been driven, by that monster, Acasto ; and I, luckless wretch ! condemned to pass the remainder of my days, the only witness of your wrongs, without having the power to ameliorate them ; and you, most unfortunate Alexena ! the mistress of the mansion, in whose dungeons your frantic brother, and miserable aunt, are confined, without exciting your pity, or even ruffling one of those tranquil smiles, ever attendant on worthless prosperity, I forgive you ; and, oh ! may heaven grant you timely repen-

tance, and that I, though amongst women the most unfortunate, may yet see and bless you, before I die."

"Gracious Providence support me!" exclaimed our heroine, as she rushed from the place of her concealment—"it is my aunt!" and the next moment sunk senseless at her feet. The rattling of her chains, as she approached, attracted the attention of Mrs. Hastings, who instantly recognized her, and with inexpressible joy, raised her senseless form to her throbbing bosom. Velasco beheld this scene in stupid amazement; but as he was blessed with lucid intervals, he, in a short time, recognised his sister, and the consequence was, joy had the most salutary effects; it restored his wandering reason; and when he found she was still the same pure and spotless angel he had always believed her, his feelings became so much composed, that he conversed rationally, and on his knees, entreated her forgiveness, for the innumerable evils, tortures, and hardships, to which he had

exposed her. She embraced, and with tears, besought him to believe she had never thought on his past follies, without praying for his restoration to virtue; and as to her forgiveness, he had that long since—Louisa having convinced her he was worthy of it.

“Then! then!” said he, “you have seen Louisa.—Oh! my sister, say she yet lives, and you complete my happiness,”

“My dear brother, she does; and is beyond the reach of the vile Philip, safe under the protection of Lord Mortimer and Carracci.”

“Carracci!—in heaven’s name, who is he? and what is the meaning of your words?”

“Be composed, Velasco, and listen to the wondrous tale I have to tell, and then with me return thanks to Almighty Providence, for saving you from crime, and me from destruction.” Alexena then related, with precision and accuracy, every event which had occurred,

from the night he left her in the Dominican convent to the present minute ; and when she had concluded, the unfortunate Velasco was greatly affected by her little narrative, lamenting the barbarity with which he had treated both her and Lord Mortimer, for whom he then felt the highest veneration and respect. Mrs Hastings now observed, it was possible that Montano might return, and succeed in tracing her, which would ensure their immediate destruction. This alarmed them considerably, and our heroine was about to hurry back to her cell, when the distant wall, with a hideous crash rent asunder, discovering to their astonishment, the martial form of Carracci, accompanied by his lordship, Louisa, and a number of the troop, among whom Alexena discerned Fernandez , who, to her incredible surprise, she found was Belzo's lieutenant, Manfrone, who with Rourke, Larco and Albert pressed forward, to congratulate her on the prospect of speedy liberation,

while Carracci ordered Mrs. Hastings and Velasco to be removed to his cavern, where Theodore, Arabel, Don Carlos, and Virginia, with a number of others, impatiently awaited their arrival. They were very unwilling to part with Alexena; but the robber was absolute, and commanded his predatory gang to hasten with all possible speed, as Montano and Don Philip were to wait on our heroine in her cell, in a very few minutes. "Be not alarmed," said the chief, addressing her; "support your spirits, and before this time to-morrow night you shall be free and happy. If Acasto should threaten to inflict any new torment, in order to obtain your hand, consent to be his wife, and leave the rest to Providence, and your friends." She was then conducted back to her cell, but not without considerable difficulty, as its labyrinths had not been visited by him for many years before, and, when at length found, he scarce had

time to withdraw, before the monk entered with a guard of soldiers, armed with carbines, and led his prisoner in silence from her dungeon. After she had been obliged to traverse an immense extent of subterranean cavern, the monk paused before a low, grated door, through which a faint light feebly glimmered, and called on Torquo to produce the key, which he seemed most unwilling to do, while his palid looks too plainly told terror was the cause. On entering, they advanced a few paces into this "darkness visible," and then Alexena was astonished to find the light proceeded from behind a black curtain, which was drawn across the cell. Montano rushed forward, pulled it from its fastenings, and the moment it fell, our heroine, shrieking, endeavoured to hide behind the rude soldiery, to whom she clung, and whose faces were also blanched with awe, as what they beheld was sufficient to excite horror in the

most savage breast; no wonder then that it should have had a most violent effect on her feelings. The ruffians gazed at her in silent pity, and waited, in trembling expectation, the elucidation of a spectacle which presented such a frightful group. At the extremity of the dungeon, a kind of throne was erected, on which was fixed, the cold and senseless form of Cerasco; his feet resting on a coffin without a lid, in which was placed the remains of the unfortunate female whom Montano had murdered, and in a shallow grave lay the bodies of her mutilated attendants, with sufficient room between them for a third person, while round their rude tomb, in the fresh-turned earth, a number of black wax tapers blazed, emitting a blue flame, which reflected a sickly light on the faces of the lifeless victims of the monk's barbarity, adding additional horrors; and at the foot of the grave next the soldiery, there was a small post, to which a chain was fastened, and to it Montano dragged our wretched

heroine, in despite of all her prayers, tears, and cries—tears that failed to excite pity in his flinty bosom. When he had secured her, he said, “ Behold those putrid carcasses—between them you shall lie in less than a moment, as cold and senseless as either, if you do not instantly swear to marry Acasto.—Aye! this night, the very minute you are released from those fetters, and on no other condition whatever shall you exist. See! a corrosive preparation is already prepared to waste that form, of whose beauty you are so proud; and if you do not sign with your lips, a solemn oath on this blessed crucifix, it shall be mixed with the filthy clay that encompasses the bones of those bodies, in less time than I have taken to pronounce your doom.”

He now paused for her reply; but it came not; her thoughts were engaged in prayer, and not until the soldiers advanced and presented their carbines, did she seem sensible of her danger. Being determined to die rather than

take the oath, though she had been assured by Carracci he would rescue her from those foes the next day, she quickly rose from her knees, and, with a voice of commanding dignity, ordered the soldiers to lower their arms; then addressed Montano:—"I have made a choice," she said, "which may affright the pusilanimous; but is it not better to rest with those mangled bodies, who, when living, were faithful to their unfortunate mistress, than wed with their murderer? This choice is mine, though a few hours, or, at most, a day, would save me for ever from the brutal tyranny of Acasto; yet, as the contrary seems to be the will of heaven, I humbly submit, and now, soldiers, you may release my soul, which, I trust, will find a place of refuge in an eternal kingdom; bear witness that I die rather than submit to infamous degradation; my forgiveness is with you all."

The soldiers groaned with anguish; they pitied, yet had no alternative.

Montano ordered them to present ; but in that dreadful moment of suspense, a voice seemed to issue from the corpse of Cerasco, commanding them to desist. One word was sufficient ; they fled in terror, and in their flight, overthrew the monk, who, while struggling to rise, was a second time crushed to the earth by the bloody figure of Hugo, which had fallen on him from the roof. On discerning the cause of this second disaster, he screamed wild and piercingly, and sunk, senseless, under the body of his late attendant. In an instant after, the same disgusting phantom which had terrified Don Philip in Alexena's chamber, rushed from behind the throne, and seized the monk by his fleecy locks ; then raised his stiletto to stab him to the heart, and would have done it, had not Carracci seized his arm.—“ Williams,” said he, “ the awful moment has not yet arrived ;—disappear.” Williams (for it was that seaman,) obeyed, and Belzo then lifted the monk from the ground, flung him

into the grave, and threw the body of Hugo on the top of him; then released our heroine, who he rapidly bore to the library, where he placed her on a sofa, and left with her a lamp which he had brought from the dungeon. "You will," he said, "be again threatened; but consent, rather than expose yourself to further trials, which may prove fatal to your reason. By this means you will gain time, and lull Acasto's fears, while I shall complete those arrangements on which our every hope of happiness depends." Carracci now withdrew, and in a few minutes after, Margaret entered, with every demonstration of the deepest sorrow pictured on her countenance; but on seeing our heroine she screamed, and was about to fly, when she was recalled by her, who, beseechingly, requested to know the nature of her fears. Margaret stood aghast; her eyes distended, and her hair on end; while she faltered—"Oh! holy virgin, protect me!—dearest lady,

what can I do for your poor troubled spirit!—Oh! God forgive those that have your death to answer for!”

“Say,” said Alexena, impatiently interrupting her, “what foolery is this? or is it possible that you, too, have leagued against my peace?”

The fearful old woman raised her lamp, and approached a few paces, but spoke not; she could not believe the evidence of her senses, until the former rose from the sopha, and again demanded an explanation. Then, and then only, Margaret was convinced it was a reality, and not a shadow she beheld, and instantly dropped on her knees, and, in an audible voice, thanked heaven for saving her “poor, dear child,” as she affectionately named our heroine.

“Oh, Donna! dear, dear Donna! forgive me, and do not wonder at my mistaking you for a ghost, when Sebastian swore he saw you shot dead, and that the devil flew away with the monk the same moment.”

“ Well, now that you are convinced that his statement is not the fact, will you have the goodness to assist me to my chamber, but first go, beg of Don Acasto, that I may not be again alarmed or disturbed the remainder of this night.” Margaret was about to comply, when Don Philip entered; he had overheard Alexena’s request and message, and in reply said, “ the fault was certainly her own, but as it was not yet too late to apply a remedy, he would vouch not only for her happiness, but safety, if she was not absolutely blind to her own interest.”

“ If Don Acasto has any thing to expect from me, it is not by insult and cruelty he will ever extort it; therefore, I trust, I may have time for reflection, without being remanded to a dungeon; for should I ever again be subjected to Montano’s brutality, I solemnly vow, that no tortures shall force an avowal, much less my consent. I will say nothing further; but Don Philip is at

liberty to draw whatever conclusion he may fancy from this declaration."

"Dearest angel!" he rapturously replied, "I sincerely, gratefully, thank you, for the illimitable happiness you have conferred. I sha'nt enlarge on this delightful topic, lest I should distress you, but ere I retire, believe me, no further violence shall be offered your person or feelings; on the contrary, every attention and——"

"I beg you may not misconceive me," she hastily observed; "for——"

"Misconceive—no, no!—the thing is impossible; but pardon me, business requires my immediate attendance; Margaret, see Lady Alexena wants for nothing. Adieu!—good night." He now vanished through a distant door, kissing his hand, and disappeared so suddenly, that it was impossible our heroine could utter that which she would have given worlds to have said, and became absolutely miserable, lest he should have construed her late words into an avowal that she consent-

ed to be his wife ; but her thoughts were interrupted by her old attendant, who observed, the night was far spent, and begged leave to light her to her chamber. She apologized for her inattention to this faithful creature, who had been silently gazing on her lovely countenance, and mentally invoking the protection of heaven, for this, her darling child, who, in a few moments, slowly and thoughtfully pursued the way to her own apartment.

CHAP. III.

“ ———— O, thou day o’ th’ world,
Chain mine arm’d neck ; leap thou, attire and all,
Through poof of harness to my heart, and there
Ride on the pants triumphing.”

ANT. & CLEO.

MONTANO, on regaining his mental powers, became transfixed with horror, on finding himself in the grave which he had prepared for Alexena ; and, on rising from under his lifeless servant, his terror was increased by reading a scroll, which was grasped by a lifeless hand, whereon was inscribed this short sentence—“ Montano, we shall meet again !”

“ Yes,” he maddening said, “ in torments ! but since this is the decree of inevitable fate, I will do things which shall gain the applause of devils ; lingering hope, farewell ! and now, accursed memento, that blasts my sight before the allotted hour, thus I dispose of thee.” He now tore the placard to

pieces, and then rushed from the dungeon. By this time, the fears of Torquo had dispersed; he, therefore, returned to seek the monk, whom he met at the door of that carnal-house. Montano started back on beholding this hoary-headed villain, who, at first, he conceived was the person who had placed the torturing placard in Hugo's hand; but, on reflection, abandoned the idea, and demanded whether Don Philip had yet retired to his chamber. On being answered in the negative, he hurried forward, and entered the library a very few minutes after Alexena had left it. Acasto had been in search of him, and at this moment chanced to pass through the adjoining corridor, when the light of Torquo's lamp induced him to return, to ascertain whether our heroine had retired, and was surprised on observing the monk, whose hands he instantly caught, and shook violently, thanking him, in the most fulsome terms, for the great service he had

rendered him. Montano was puzzled to guess his meaning, as it never occurred to him that Alexena would consent, and when he heard she had, he hesitated to believe it, until Acasto referred him to Margaret for a confirmation of the joyful news. Astonished beyond measure, he accompanied him to his apartment, where they retired for the purpose of digesting their future plans, and to fix an hour for the celebration of the marriage, which they determined should be solemnized next evening, at farthest ; and while they were busily employed making those arrangements, Alexena sat in her lonely chamber, recalling the past events of her life, and with grief beheld a map which displayed nothing but shoals and quick-sands ; not one week of the last two years having passed without bringing some grievous misfortune or disappointment. She accounted herself a tennis-ball of fortune, and, as yet, there was no absolute

certainly she would escape further persecution. Her damask cheek pensively rested on her hand, while

“ ——— Patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once : her smiles and tears
Were like a better day : Those happy smiles,
That play’d on her ripe lip, seem’d not to know
What guests were in her eyes ; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropp’d.—In brief, sorrow
Would be a rarity most beloved, if all
Could so become it.”

And in this most interesting situation she was startled by a noise, which issued from the dusky recess of her apartment ; but her alarm was dissipated by the well-known voice of Carracci, who, the next moment, stood before her ; his countenance was more than usually expressive ;—an expression which inspired terror, and there was a hollowness in his voice, almost more than mortal.

“ Lady Alexena,” said he, “ all is completed ; your persecution ends, and before this hour to-morrow, my

enemies perish for ever. This night I might steep them in each other's blood; but my great revenge would then be incomplete. The cause of my intrusion here is, to ask a request, and obtain a promise; the first is, that should I prove successful, you will accept of Lord Mortimer's hand, and allow me to bestow on him the most precious gift; the other, that you will apparently comply with all Acasto's orders, as the apartment which I wished he might appoint, is already chosen by himself, where Montano vainly hopes he will perform the ceremony. Your wedding garments have been provided by me; here is a key; you will find them in yonder cabinet; and I beg you will use them as the gift of a man, who pants for the moment in which he will be able to prove himself worthy of your respect. Acasto must see you in all your loveliness—must imagine joys that shall never be realized; and when he is about to raise the cup of happiness to

his lip, I hope to dash it from him for ever.—Yes, the treacherous, remorseless, venomous, lying, ungrateful villain, shall feel what it is to brave a Spaniard's vengeance.—Oh ! forgive, Lady Alexena, this effusion of a violent temper ; but if your tender bosom knew the pangs that he has rent mine with, you should not wonder that I do hate him.” She, at this moment, raised her fine, expressive eyes to Carracci's countenance, which was awfully terrible ; his eye flashed indignant fires. A revengeful Spaniard, in all the gloomy horrors of his nature, stood confessed, and though she felt the conviction, that he had been monstrously aggrieved, she could not excuse the expression of such implacable malice, and almost sunk from her seat with fear. The dark nodding plumes of the helmet which shaded his impatient brow, his tall majestic figure, his deep and sonorous voice, his pale and quivering lip, while denouncing destruction on Don Philip and the monk, gave an awful

something to his form and appearance, that impressed the timid Alexena with the idea that he was superhuman ; but as soon as his reflections turned into a different channel, as soon as they were soothed with the hopes that he would be able, in a few hours, to restore the adorable creature before him, to her lover, to her brother and her friends, his countenance brightened like the sun peeping forth from beneath a summer cloud, and the terrible Carracci became the elegant, the respectful courtier. Our heroine marked the change, and with it her confidence returned—her fears vanished ; she promised to observe his directions with the most rigid exactness, and to do as he would have her. The deep blush that now suffused her pale cheek, told Belzo that Lord Mortimer had every reason to be happy, and she rose in his estimation more than ever, by this tacit acknowledgement of her affection. “ Such artless innocence,” said he, mentally, “ is the peculiar attribute of angels ; and surely

if ever human being was perfect, this is that being:" then resuming the conversation, observed—"to-morrow night you shall be happy—and I revenged; hereafter you will hear something of my history, and be able to judge the cause I have for hatred."—Again his countenance fell, while Alexena, without venturing to look at him, said, "I have always been taught to consider hatred as the worst, and most detestable of the human passions; and, therefore, feel grieved it can, for a moment, find a place in the bosom of my friend."

"Your friend!—oh! is it possible that Carracci, the outlaw, the chieftain of a predaceous gang, is so highly honoured."

"I do not recognise him as such," she faintly answered, while she involuntarily shuddered at the ideas he had awakened. "I know he has many inestimable qualities, and among them, I can point out some splendid ones."

"May I entreat to know which," said

he, supplicatingly ; at the same time venturing to take her hand.

“ Steady friendship, compassion for the wretched, with a heart and hand ever ready to relieve them.”

“ Oh! you are a flattering panegyrist ; but I cannot allow a particle of compassion to interfere for either Acasto or the monk ; it would be an insult, a mockery of justice to let either escape ; accursed villains! that could be so diabolically savage, as to load those wrists of your’s with chains.”

Again our heroine caught his eye, he smiled, but the smile was ghastly ; he let her hand fall from his, she having repeatedly, though gently, endeavoured to withdraw it, then turned away, and walked back and forward with increasing agitation. At length he suddenly said, “ I am not wont to be savagely unmerciful, but the doom of both Acasto and his confessor is unavoidably sealed ; the united beauties of this world in tears, nay, on their

knees, would not induce me to pardon ; but the rest of their wild associates I will not punish with death ; no ! Lady Alexena has saved them all, except Torquo ; yes, the infamous, detestable Torquo, shall have reason to curse the hour of his birth, and perish !”

“ Blessed is the merciful,” she timely observed.

“ Yes,” said he ; “ and the peace maker, for his is the kingdom of heaven ; but those villains were neither merciful, nor peace makers ; they were roaring wolves, hyennas, demons ;—pardon,” he continued with quickness, “ pardon the repetition of this most disagreeable subject, and forget, if possible, that you have ever heard it. I have already trespassed on your patience, and the hours allotted to repose, therefore, shall now wish you happy slumbers ; but before I retire, let me beg you will to-morrow confine yourself as much as possible to your chamber, and should any strangers arrive to witness the intended ceremony, receive

them with all the ease you can command, that every suspicion may be hushed in Don Philip's bosom, and at the same time, sedulously avoid any species of conversation with Montano;—farewel, and may guardian seraphs watch round your couch, and drive every evil thing from your pillow.” He now, bowing, vanished through the recess, whose solid stone-work yawned to receive him; and once more our heroine was left to the silence, the solitude of her apartment; on waking in the morning, the first subject that recurred to her recollection, was the interview with Carracci the preceding night, and she then remembered the key of the cabinet, where her dress was deposited; on examination, it proved to be more splendid than imagination could devise; but how to account to Acasto, when he should see her arrayed in it, she knew not, therefore, determined, if he made any observations, to inform him where she had found it, and then leave him to unravel the mystery; but for this, there was no

necessity, as Margaret brought her many beautiful habits, which Don Philip had ordered some weeks before ; and as he had not seen them, could not form any idea whether it was one of them or not. Alexena looked forward to approaching night, with such a diversity of sensations, and of fears, that it is impossible to give a just description of them ; anxiety was traced on every line of her countenance, and she started, nay, almost screamed, at the slightest noise, while Margaret, who had been informed of the intended marriage, tortured her with questions, to which prudence forbade her making any reply. Several persons of suspicious appearance had arrived during the day, among whom were a number of females, who, from the lightness of their behaviour, disgusted our heroine, and made her shudder at the idea of being united to a man who was even regardless of appearances. He had waited on her several times, with his earnest entrea-

ties, that she should consider every thing in the castle at her disposal, and order whatever she might judge requisite to add to her happiness, or give lustre to her beauty on that most joyful occasion : and at those moments, the dreadful denunciation of the robber recurred to her recollection, and she trembled at the idea, that the unconscious wretch was doomed never to behold the light of the succeeding day ; then she reviewed the character of Carracci, and saw much to find fault with, particularly, that inveterate hatred which he nourished ; she allowed he might have sustained a number of injuries of the most trying description, but were they such as warranted that unforgiveness ;—no ! nothing should induce us to submit to that most vicious vice ; for when encouraged, it rankles and corrodes the bosom which gives it birth, and but too often leads to the commission of unnatural crimes—often to murder. We should, therefore, be always cautious against its effects, and

in ourselves, carefully crush the first buds of this malignant passion, lest they might blow, and bring forth the fruits of everlasting shame and infamy. Such were the reflections of Alexena, but she felt confident Carracci was a much better character than his terrible avocation, avowed habits, and reputed criminality, led the world to suppose he was. In him, report exhibited a strange contrast of vice and virtue. She had branded him with the opprobrious epithet of outlaw, robber, felon, murderer!—"No, no, no!—this last cannot be," said Alexena to herself; "the friend of the oppressed, the parent of the fatherless, the terror of evil doers, the protector of Mortimer, Louisa, and myself, cannot be so debased." She drove the idea from her mind with abhorrence, and wondered how she could for an instant entertain, harbour, or conceive it. "But I am not to blame," she continued, "it was not I who gave the horrid name, nor do I believe him

guilty." Thus are we always apt to form favourable opinions of our friends, notwithstanding there may be the most glaring defects staring us in the face. Our heroine, in the first instance, wished Carracci good and virtuous, from her own pure and beneficent nature; and in the second, because her slight knowledge of him, led her to believe he had been formed to move in the most brilliant and distinguished scenes of life. "It is impossible," she said, "he can be a mean and unenlightened peasant; he certainly is not; his accent, noble deportment, piercing eye, and elegant address, announce the courtier rather than the cottager. Then who can he be?—I know not; this night promises to elucidate the mystery. Well, until then, I must have patience."

Here she concluded her mental observations and inquiry, then commended her spirit to the care and protection of her Almighty Parent, and returned thanks for the late sweet and refreshing sleep, of which the guilty

vainly seek the consolation. Guardian angels had hovered round her couch, whispering peace and joy to her bosom, while, in dreams, they foretold the comforts and happiness to come ; they soothed her for all sorrows past, and promised to bestow all the felicity that can be enjoyed by mortals in this life, and everlasting joys hereafter. Then, no wonder that she awoke refreshed ; assured and encouraged to bear the approaching change with calmness and fortitude. On her knees, she petitioned for steadiness and strength to support this great and eventful trial, on which her every hope was at issue ; and heaven smiled, and granted her requests. She, therefore, descended to the breakfast parlour with a calm countenance, firm step, and a heart exulting in having deserved the reward which the Almighty Dispenser of good promised to bestow, as a compensation for the intrepidity with which she had combated in the cause of virtue.

On entering the room, Don Philip rose to receive, and announce her as his bride, which was distressing beyond measure, as all eyes were fixed on her, and the low whispers of—how lovely! how extremely beautiful!—reached her ears every instant; but breakfast, at length, diverted their attention, and the moment it was over, she retired to her chamber, where Margaret being summoned, said her marriage would have been solemnized at noon, had it been possible to procure a notary in time to prepare a proper instrument, by which her lord could make a settlement suitable to the immense fortune he was to receive, and to which she had been entitled since her brother's death. “ I overheard father Montano read a letter, stating the particulars, and which was sent to a lawyer last night after you left the library; it set forth all about your uncle, Don Diego de Guzman, and something concerning an abbess of Dominicans, with other matters that this poor old brain of mine cannot

remember ; but unless Mustapha arrives with that paper before eight o'clock this evening, the ceremony will be postponed until to-morrow."

Alexena now comprehended the extent of Acasto's villany. It was evident, the moment she signed the deed mentioned by Margaret, his intention was to consign Velasco to the tomb. "Yes! Carracci," she said, "you expected this, and lest some fatality might arise, have most kindly removed my unfortunate brother beyond his reach." She dwelt on this subject much longer than she intended ; but was, at length, awakened from her reverie by Margaret, who endeavoured to give a description of the great portrait apartment, which was already fitted up as a chapel, under the inspection of Montano, who had not retired to rest the preceding night. "It is mighty beautiful," she observed, "yet you don't seem very happy to hear about all those fine doings ; but don't grieve, for your goodness cannot fail to reform my lord, who, if not

badly advised, would be a good man ; at least, on your account, I hope so." Alexena smiled at the awkward attempt poor Margaret made to excuse her master, and was about to reply, when the former was called on to attend the affairs of the household, and had scarce left the apartment, before Fernandez entered with a billet from Carracci, in which he requested she would steadily refuse to sign any written instrument whatever, should one be presented for her signature, before she was led to the altar. He also stated, that two lovely girls would attend her, who were the daughters of a noble of the first distinction, and who he had contrived to impose on Acasto for persons of a different description, that had been sent for by him. " I have," continued Belzo, " intercepted them, and have taken the liberty to substitute those who are my friends, and worthy of the confidence of Lady Alexena. Mustapha, the lawyer, shall be served in the same manner ; therefore, when you

are once before the altar, sign, without fear or doubt, the contract which will be presented ; but should you recognize the pretended notary, be silent as the grave.—Farewel until nine!

B. C.”

Our heroine read this with a painful variety of sensations. The robber might yet be an agent of Acasto's, as where could he procure the daughters of a Spanish grandee, who would voluntarily consent to risk their lives to oblige him ; but had he not repeatedly saved Louisa and herself ? Yes ; but that might be a snare laid to entrap her, and what to do, she could not determine. Mortimer was in the power of the bandit, and had always been most kindly treated. This thought, in a great measure, dissipated her fears ; and when she recollected the conversation she had accidentally overheard between Don Philip and Torquo, relative to Clarissa, her doubts vanished,

and with a smile of grateful thankfulness, she told Fernandez, who, in future, we shall call Monfranc, that she would be particularly attentive to his cautions, and then inquired whether Acasto knew he was in the castle.

“Certainly not; but he will be surprised to see me this night, particularly when I wash this olive dye from my complexion; but it is now the hour you should dress for that dinner which shall be the last Philip will ever partake of in this world, unless you are able to prevail on Carracci to pardon him.”

“The wretched man,” she observed, “is ill prepared for eternity, and heaven forbid I should not interfere; at all events, I trust I shall be able to have his sentence mitigated to banishment, should his fate be absolutely at the disposal of your chieftain.”

“Not absolutely, as the inquisition have taken cognizance of his crimes; but more of this hereafter, as I should have returned long since.”

Monfrane now respectfully withdrew, and our heroine sat down to her toilet, which she finished with much difficulty, not from the want of accustomed assistance, but from the excessive agitation of her mind. On descending, she found the saloon crowded with strangers, at which her surprise encreased, particularly when she heard many of them say they had just arrived from Madrid, others from Valencia and Toledo, and found many among them were gay females, who, from the vivacity of their looks, did not seem much fatigued by travelling; but Don Philip, she thought, might, nay, must have invited them some weeks before, to witness this detestable union; “and they have now arrived,” she mentally said, “to witness his execution.”

A few moments after the desert, the ladies retired to the drawing-room, where Don Philip followed them, and then introduced the two lovely girls, mentioned by Carracci, to our heroine, as the daughters of a most particular

friend, who were anxious to attend her to the hymeneal altar. Alexena gave each an expressive look, as she curtsied, which they understood, and shortly after, they stole from the room together, unnoticed, except by Acasto, who now chided lazy time, and almost every moment sent domestics to the draw-bridge or the ramparts, to ascertain was there any sign of Mustapha's approach. At length, the lawyer was announced, which created great bustle among the guests; the ladies hastened to their chambers, to array themselves in wedding garments, while our heroine was attired in that magnificent dress which had been presented to her by the robber. Her maids were very lovely, very young, and very accomplished, and by their attention and kindness, in a great degree, soothed her agitation. It had been agreed that cannon should give the signal when every thing was ready. The firing of a gun was to summon every individual to the great reception-room—of two, that the bride

and groom stood before the altar—of three, that the marriage contract was signed; and a grand salute from every cannon on both tower and ramparts, the moment the words were said.

When the great clock struck eight, Alexena's terror encreased to a painful degree; before another hour, how many dreadful events would occur; Acasto, and it was possible, Mortimer, Carracci and herself, might be in eternity; if one, nay the most trifling, of the bandit's plans should miscarry: what blood would be then shed, what horrors ensue; Lucinda and Zorayda saw and felt her terrors; but they were not forgetful of Belzo's caution, and represented the impossibility of any failure on the part of her friends. While they yet conversed, the thunder of a gun, declared the dreadful moment was at hand, and our trembling heroine slowly proceeded towards the reception room, supported by her beauteous maidens. We shrink from the task of describing

the bride, the most fanciful imagination cannot form any thing so enchantingly lovely; the varying colours of her cheek, now pale, now dyed with virgin blushes; her sylph-like form, arrayed in matchless beauty; her sufferings past; her present trying situation; her extreme timidity. Oh! our readers may conceive, but we cannot do adequate justice, to her exquisite charms; then imagine, also, what must have been the feelings of Don Philip, when he led her towards the altar. The moment she appeared before it, the second guns were fired; the procession having reached it in the following order: First, a number of elegant cavaliers and ladies; next, the bride and groom, her attendant maids, his gentlemen; behind them Mustapha with the contract; a crowd of visitors and domestics, guards, &c. followed. Montano was already robed, waiting in this temporary chapel, which was a room of immense dimensions, being one hun-

dred and forty feet long, eighty wide, and fifty feet high; galleries wound round it on the outside; by day it was lit by glass domes placed in the roof, but at night, by twelve chandeliers suspended from the ceiling, by an equal number of massy gilt chains, and a vast profusion of variegated lamps, formed into emblematic figures, which displayed considerable taste. The walls were decorated by full length portraits of the Santa Marco family, as large as life, portrayed in the different costumes of their day; some as statesmen, bishops, grandees, knights, others as admirals and generals, warriors who had gained immortal honors in their country's service, and were crowned with never-fading laurels; the opposite side of the apartment was occupied by the likenesses of the females, among whom many had been eminent for every virtue, beauty and accomplishment; and, at this moment, the eyes of each seemed endowed with life, while imagination gave an air of anxious

expression to their features, as they seemed to gaze on the beautiful bride, whose usurping lord had trampled on their ancient rights, and who had rudely thrust their son and representative from this, the venerable mansion of his ancestors. Alexena, in return, apparently looked towards them for protection, and seemed to beseech them to save her from relentless tyranny, until the weakness of her spirits had actually endowed them with animation.

The nuptial party had entered this apartment from the galleries on each side, as the great folding doors, which constituted the grand entrance, were immovable, though every exertion had been used by Acasto to force them open ; the space on their outside formed a kind of aisle like that of a cathedral, which made him more anxious to have them forced, that it might add to the beauty of this temporary chapel. When he and our heroine stood before the altar, Mustapha came forward with the contract, which he ex-

plained without reading, and then presented a pen to Don Philip, who knelt on a velvet cushion, placed the solemn instrument on a small desk, which was fastened to the railing, and then signed with a triumphant heart; he rose, and with a smile of exulting anticipation, placed the pen within the agitated hand of Alexena, whose taper fingers were so tremulous, that she held it with difficulty. She dropped on one knee; Acasto gazed on the deed, while Montano's sparkling eyes and fitful countenance, expressed undefinable feelings. Our heroine now ventured to look round—all were silent. "Oh! my God!" she mentally said, "support me;" she caught an expressive glance from Mustapha—her bosom throbbed violently—she felt the conviction all was well, and instantly signed the contract; there were two other seals and marks for signatures, and Acasto required their meaning. "They are," said the lawyer, "for the names of the trustees." "And who are the fittest

persons," he demanded.—“ Lord Mortimer and I!” said a voice, which seemed to outvie the thunder, and instantly the heavy doors burst open, and struck the solid walls with such violence as shook the castle to its base, displaying the form of Belzo Carracci, armed cap-a-pie; his eyes glittering in the fires of vengeance, and his brow crowned with a thousand horrors! He stood in the door-way, and behind, in the dark corridor, a train of his fiercest banditti, part of whom seemed lost in misty distance; but those next his person bore torches, whose red glare shone on his armour, adding terror to terror; his voice was fate—his frown death; all eyes were rivetted to his figure—all hearts quailed with fear; a scarf of crimson velvet, richly embroidered, was the only ornament he wore; in his right hand he grasped his sparkling falchion, in his left, a flaming torch, and before he advanced a single step, stamped his foot; the signal whistle rung through the distant cham-

bers, and instantly all the portraits vanished, while each aperture was filled by two savage ruffians; one presenting a carbine at Acasto and his confessor, the other armed with a sabre, displaying at one view, the entire troops of this predaceous chieftain. All motion, all hope, seemed extinct; all were petrified with horror—with fear—with amazement; until Carracci, in a voice ever to be remembered, said, “Alexena saves all—but two; therefore, let no man move on pain of instant death. Mortimer appear and defend your wife!” His lordship, who had been until then concealed behind some of the banditti in the lower apertures, now sprung from his hiding place, and as he bounded on the floor, presented a pistol at Acasto—another at the monk, exclaiming, “to stir is to perish!” here our heroine, in despite of her utmost exertion, became faint; but, Sir Edmond Hastings, in the person of Mustapha, flew to her assistance. Carracci approached; each eye was on him,

he passed in solemn silence, unattended by his guard, and the next instant stood before Acasto ; who, despicable wretch ! was pale as death. The hour of retribution had arrived ; escape was impossible ; but he tried to pluck courage from misfortune, and desperation was fast kindling a flame, which might have been fatal to some, had not Carracci, at that eventful moment, uncovered his brows, and in a hollow tone, deep as if it had issued from a tomb, demanded, “ Philip, dost thou know me ? ” Acasto ventured to raise his eyes, only to gaze in horror ; instantly his face became distorted, his limbs convulsed, his bosom heaved, almost to bursting ; his breathing became short ; the cold, chill damps of death dropt from his brow ; every joint trembled ; his eye-lids fell over their blood-shot orbs ; his heart ceased to throb ; nature was exhausted, he sunk—groaned—and with a faint struggle, pronounced the name, “ Don Miguel ! ” and expired. A deep silence

followed, but the words of Acasto were not likely to allow its long duration. A busy hum repeated the name—"Don Miguel," an hundred times, accompanied by the exclamation of—"Is it possible!" "Yes, in the robber Carracci, behold Miguel Saint Marco, once more the liege lord of this castle, with a character unstained, unpolluted by crime. Those holy inquisitors, to whose power I deliver those arch villains, Montano and Torquo, have the king's writ for reinstating me in my rights, and that instrument which Acasto has signed, is nothing more than a detail of the numberless crimes which he has committed, and for which he demands pardon from Lady Alexena and this English noble. Had he read, it is likely it would have produced the same melancholy effects, which my appearance caused; for while affixing his signature, he felt convinced he was wronging a man who he had almost irreparably injured, and who, it was his avowed intention to murder, before the

sun should rise to-morrow; that person is Velasco de Guzman, who you here behold rescued from the filthy dungeon in which he has been buried those many months;—but I am trespassing on the happiness of two of the most deserving of beings. Remove that monster, Montano, to a distance from the holy altar, which is defiled by his presence, and let the kind Zelo resume his place.” The good father advanced when the troop had removed the monk.—“ Let him,” continued Don Miguel, “ not be taken to prison, until he first beholds the fruits of his industrious villany blasted, until he sees Donna Alexena the happy wife of this happy Englishman.—No reluctance, lady; you know I have your promise.” Our heroine presented her hand to the adoring Mortimer, who received it as the kindest, first, best gift of heaven, while silent tears announced the heart-felt joy of all present. The very robbers were affected, and gazed with delight on this scene, while their countenances

were almost softened to harmony.—Zelo bestowed the nuptial blessing, assisted by the Rev. William Jones, whose joy was perfect, and in a few moments our heroine became Lady Alexena Mortimer, the wife of the idol of her heart. Such happiness repaid, more than repaid, years of painful anxiety, and the past was forgotten in the bright prospects of the future. The guns having announced the celebration of this most wished-for ceremony, the gay crowd gathered in groups, to let the inquisitors lead off their prisoners, and the banditti to secure the soldiers of Don Philip, who, as yet, had no intimation of what was passing in the castle, as all the avenues of it were filled with Don Miguel's troops, and those of the inquisition. The signals for firing the cannon were conveyed by the former, to those who were ordered to attend for the purpose, and they were afterwards secured without a blow, so that, by proper precautions, bloodshed was prevented.

Before the soldiers retired, the writ for Don Miguel's restoration being read, he bade all welcome, and when his domestics had removed Acasto's body, he thus addressed his auditory : —“ My ever dear friends, and you my faithful band, I rejoice that our late misery has thus terminated ; that good order is restored ; and believe me, my dependants shall have cause to bless the propitious day, which has restored Miguel to the hall of his fathers. The wretched man whose remains has been just borne from your sight, was the cause of all my sufferings ; he involved me and my dearest relations, in misery and disgrace ; among whom were my sister and her husband Don Selib—those I had the happiness to rescue from the jaws of death. In the latter, Lord Mortimer may recognise his guide, Monfrane ; and Lady Alexena, her friend Fernandez ; in the person of the flippant and talkative Larco you behold their son

Celio, who has happily escaped ; but Cerasco, my unfortunate neighbour, fell Montano's victim, at the moment he was pursuing the equally unfortunate Geraldine, who also perished by the monk's hand ; for it was she whom he shot on the ramparts, when the fatal ball was intended for Bolerno. As Don Philip is now before an Eternal Judge, I shall be silent, let his vices die, and be buried with him in an obscure grave ; but as to that subtle villain, that pander of crime, Montano, the justice which he has scoffed at shall overtake him ; she shall be appeased for the social ties on which he has trampled, and for the peaceful homes he has destroyed. By him, the kind and benevolent have been deceived ; the vicious goaded on to crime ; God has been blasphemed—his laws perverted—chastity violated—the withering hand of murder levelled at numbers, and the altars stained with blood and pollution. The spot is accursed on

which he breathes ; his touch is contagion ; his words daggers ; then is it not just, that he shall be crushed, to prevent a repetition of further crime ; to prevent the poison of his precepts blighting the yet unsullied ; and to save human nature the pain, the disgrace, of giving food and shelter to such a reptile ; but enough—let us now retire to the banqueting chamber, where, in a very few moments, I I hope to see the happiest group on earth. He was then followed by these friends, who were, in a short time, arranged round the social board, at the head of which was Mrs. Hastings, (who seemed the happy mother of all the females present,) with Don Vasquez on her right, and M. Santanella, Arabel's father, on her left ; at the foot, Don Miguel, with our heroine on his right, her lover next her ; on his left, Louisa and Velasco ; on each side of the two former, Don Selib and Clarissa, Virginia and Carlos, Arabel and Theodore, Eveline and Antonio, Lucinda and

Zorayda, the latter of whom was evidently a great favourite with Don Miguel ; Sir Edmond and Bolerno ; Larco, now Don Celio, whose eyes often wandered towards those of Lucinda, while her kindling blushes gave birth to no very silent whispers ; the fathers Zelo and Bernardo close to their illustrious entertainer ; Mr. Jones, Galafron, the chief inquisitor, and above forty others, among whom were many lovely females from the adjacent towns, with Rourke, Albert, Williams, Henriquez, &c. attending. This world could not produce such a happy assemblage, and while they enjoyed the good things above, the banditti were entertained below, where Margaret presided as mistress of the ceremonies ; and once more the halls of Santa Marco rung with joy and innocent merriment ; for the real terrors of the troop were merely vested in their name.

It was nigh two o'clock in the morning, ere the charming Virginia, now a

mother, led our heroine from the supper-room, who retired without exciting any particular observation, accompanied by her beauteous maids. Immediately after, Eveline withdrew, and as she passed his lordship, signified, that he should be sent for very shortly; he evinced his gratitude by a gentle pressure of her hand; but his impatience rendered it impossible to await the wished-for signal; every minute was an age—a moment became insupportable; and he stole from the banquet unperceived. When at the door of the nuptial chamber, he paused—feared—yet wished to enter; but did not linger long, until it was opened by Lucinda, who, with Zorayda, had bade Aléxena adieu; she was at that time standing almost undressed, attended by Virginia and Eveline. His lordship was now obliged to retire into an adjoining gallery; but, in a few moments, the latter passed, with the intention of sending for him, which he no sooner observed, than, rushing from his hiding place,

he kissed her hand, and those of her fair companions, then flew to the apartment where his bride lay expecting, trembling, blushing. He quickly ascended the bed of blisses, and clasped her to his throbbing bosom ;—and here we shall draw the curtain.

Don Miguel sat with his happy guests until early dawn, who then retired, astonished and delighted at the joyful termination of the last few eventful hours, while he—dread chieftain ! repaired to Galafron's chamber, to consult with him how they should dispose of Terquo and the monk.

CHAP. IV.

“ Away with —, and to a death
Of nameless horrors bear them !”

NEXT morning, at early dawn, Galafron despatched a messenger to the inquisitorial tribunal of Madrid, with information that every thing had succeeded to the utmost of his expectations—that Montano had been seized, and was to be tried on the evening of that day, of whose conviction there could not be a doubt—and that he had sent for the superiors of two neighbouring monasteries, to assist on the solemn occasion.

It was noon before Lord and Lady Mortimer, with their friends, assembled at breakfast, where our now happy heroine received the congratulations of all present. She was pitiably distressed, and her burning blushes added to her confusion, until Don Miguel good-naturedly changed the conversation, and gave a new turn to the thoughts of

his guests, by requiring, in the name of the holy tribunal, the attendance and testimony of all those who knew Montano, or had suffered by his cruelty. An immense subterranean hall had been appointed, which was to be fitted up as a temporary court for the purpose, the inquisitors having declared it contrary to all rule to try a criminal by day-light, against whom so many atrocious charges were exhibited. This requisition cast a momentary gloom over the lively group; but the attention of Don Miguel, and his unceasing endeavours to amuse them, restored their usual gaiety, until the monk's judges arrived, who having partaken of some refreshment, issued orders to conduct Montano forthwith to the court, where Lord Mortimer was shortly after required to give evidence against him. On his entrance, he was astonished to find that a few hours had been sufficient for Galafron and his officers to erect a throne of terrors, very little inferior to that of Madrid; beneath

which, on a kind of platform, lay the body of Acasto; his countenance distorted, and bearing all those marks which distinguish persons who die in convulsions; at the further end, there were two posts, to which the monk and Torquo were chained, while ordinaries, familiars, mutes, and all other necessary officers, attended.

By Don Miguel's request, Montano was allowed to be present at his trial, which was both fair and impartial, and during its continuance, he displayed great presence of mind, by asking a number of questions, which were unequalled for subtilty, malice, and deep enunning; many of them having startled Galafron himself; but all his wiles were likely to be unavailing, as every moment new witnesses appeared, who bore testimony to his vicious course of life. The examination of Lord Mortimer was of considerable length, as he was obliged to enumerate every circumstance that had occurred, from the night of Montano's shipwreck on the

coast of Hollywood castle, to the hour in which the inquisitorial troops had entered Santa Marco. The second witness was Lady Alexena, she deposed to several important facts; the death of Cerasco; the prisoner's cruelty to herself; his attempt against Louisa, and many other circumstances, with which our kind readers are already acquainted. Don Miguel was the third person, and his examination occupied two hours, as it was deemed necessary, he should give an accurate statement of every transaction, from the commencement of his acquaintance with Don Philip, down to the present moment. He, therefore, stated, Acasto had been for many years previous to their introduction connected with a number of infamous sharpers, who shared the iniquitous spoils gleaned from the vile and detestable vice of gaming, and on which they not only existed, but were, by such plunder, enabled to indulge in the most licentious courses. He was

only twenty-seven years old, when introduced to witness, yet had been a professed gambler for some years before their friendly intercourse, which was only for a period of four months; but in that time he had effected the ruin of the latter, in the manner stated by Clarissa, with this difference, that on the night after Don Miguel left Madrid, accompanied by Henriquez, his faithful German servant, he, by his inquiries, learned that every member of the holy brotherhood had received a description of his person; therefore, to elude their vigilance for any length of time, would be impossible; and was also aware, that if he surrendered when public opinion flowed high against him, it would be voluntary submission to the axe of the executioner. Thus situated, he determined to circulate a report of his being assassinated, which was the most likely means to stifle all exertion that would otherwise be made for his apprehension;

his affectionate domestics approved of the plan, undertook to give it publicity, and afterwards to return to the Pyrenees to join him; as he had purposed visiting Santa Marco, where there was yet some valuable jewels and a small sum of money deposited in a spot known only to himself. But before Don Miguel had reached the castle, he was captured by a horde of banditti, who had recently lost their chieftain; and before he had been their prisoner many weeks, was unanimously chosen. The desperation of his affairs, and his resentment against a government which had treated him with such rigour, induced him to embrace their offer; besides, the power he would possess, promised ample means of revenge, not only on Philip, but all his other enemies. The retreat of the banditti, at that period, was precarious and unsafe; their new chieftain, therefore, led them to those caverns already described, as soon as he had exacted a solemn oath of implicit obedience.

Their late leader was named Belzo Carracci, he therefore adopted the appellation, and in a little time was looked up to by his ferocious troop, as the most heroic of mortals ; he softened their manners by his example, and by a sort of sophistry, directed all their exploits against those who, from the viciousness of their private life, or public character, merited punishment ; those, and those only, were the persons who suffered, in either person or property, which, in a short time, gave him a distinguished name among freebooters. In one of his excursions, in the wilds of the mountains, he found Don Selib in the cottage of a poor peasant, wounded and insensible, with a little girl weeping beside his heathy couch ; surprised and grieved beyond measure at this unlooked-for misfortune, he divided the troop into small parties, and sent them in different directions, to seize, if possible, the perpetrators of the dreadful outrage ; about day-light the following morning, the band returned, and four

of them brought information, that they had overtaken a noble, with a numerous retinue of armed domestics, who conveyed a lady and a child into the castle of Santa Marco. This was sufficient ; Don Miguel had not a doubt, but Philip was that person, and as soon as Don Selib recovered the use of his speech, he confirmed his fears. It was many weeks before the latter could be removed, and during that time, the peasant and his family had been unremitting in their attention, particularly their daughter Geraldine, to whom Don Miguel became so much attached, that he prevailed on her father to allow him to send her to a neighbouring convent, the superior of which was his relation, and to whom he confided his real situation ; having first obtained a solemn vow of secrecy. Geraldine was extremely handsome, and in a few years, became an object of universal admiration ; but her beauty and simplicity ended in her destruction. The gay and dissipated Cerasco heard of her charms,

and pressed his mother to invite her to their mansion; there promised her marriage, and she afterwards fell a sacrifice to his infamous stratagems. When Don Miguel heard of the ruin of his favourite, he led his troop to her betrayer's residence, and there punished him severely; after which he conveyed the fair mourner to a distant convent, where she remained several months; at length, having expressed an earnest wish to take the veil, he sent Bondello and Spantani to conduct her to his relative, as she wished to return to her motherly protection. Cerasco had always regretted, and would have married her, rather than submit to an eternal separation; therefore, had the convent incessantly watched, and immediately obtained information of her removal. Delighted at the prospect of regaining his treasure, he armed a few domestics, and commenced a rapid pursuit, but only arrived on the spot where her attendants were slain, just time enough to learn she was in the

power of Acasto, and then on her way to the castle, and there he also willingly submitted to be conveyed. Bondello and Spantani, were the fiercest robbers of the troop, and fought with surprising bravery in her defence, combating eight times their number, and fell, sword in hand, without uttering a groan. Like wolves they contended, and like those animals, died in silence.

On Selib's restoration to perfect health, he was elected first lieutenant, by the mutual consent of the banditti, who named him Monfrane, and then Don Miguel, for the first time, initiated the robbers in all the dreadful secrets of the caverns, at the same time declaring his real name, and proving it by his knowledge of all the private entrances and passages of the castle, and by many documents, which removed every shadow of doubt. It was while accidentally roaming through its privacies, that he overheard Acasto threaten to murder Clarissa's child, and by his timely appearance prevented

that horrid deed. Selib was, at this time, slowly recovering from the effect of his wounds, otherwise Don Miguel would have made him acquainted with her dangerous situation ; but he feared to inform him, lest his impatience should retard his recovery.

At the time Torquo so inhumanly wounded Clarissa, her brother was on his return from Italy, where he had been, in hopes of interesting two cardinals, his particular friends, who could effectually serve him, by their influence with the pontiff, and not only have him recalled from such disgraceful exile, but punish his enemies for their infamous treachery. Most unfortunately, however, those sons of the church were both absent on important missions, and Don Miguel was forced to return, dispirited as well as disappointed, and was on his way to the cavern, when his sister's piercing shrieks summoned him to her assistance. Before he went to Rome, he informed her he was Carracci the robber, and promised to be

her friend, but had not discovered his affinity; and, his visor being always down, of his countenance she could not form a conjecture; therefore, her surprise and joy may be easily imagined, when she not only found a brother, but a husband, in the persons of Carracci and Monfrane. The happy tidings were communicated by Don Miguel himself, immediately after her recovery, and, in a short time, it was judged expedient for Monfrane to take the name of Fernandez, and enter into the service of Acasto, that he should always be able to account for any strange occurrence that the frequent visits of the troops might render necessary; and also, that he might, if requisite, supply them with ammunition, and render the arms of Acasto's people useless. But it was not Don Miguel's intention to resort to those measures, until such time as he had effectually secured the pontiff's friendly interference, and then he knew success must eventually ensue. Thus sixteen years had

elapsed, before our heroine was conveyed to Santa Marçó, and during that time, the name of Belzo Carracci was known in every province of Spain; and he was equally well acquainted with almost every circumstance of peculiar interest in them. At the period Lord Mortimer and Alexena had arrived at Bayonne, Selib and Henriquez, under their feigned names, discovered Acensto and the monk, with whose persons and characters they were but too well acquainted; and, as soon as they learned the intentions of the former, they communicated with Don Miguel, who was then in a cottage on the French side of the Pyrenees. By this time, it was notorious that Montano had robbed the Dominicans in the vicinity of Sigüenza; also, that our heroine, and several others, had escaped therefrom. This information gave Don Miguel considerable satisfaction; first, because so many lovely women were restored to society; and, in the second place, the Dominicans were justly punished for

their cruelty and credulity. Notwithstanding, he determined to punish Montano, and, if possible, rescue our heroine; therefore, commanded Selib to be in readiness to conduct Lord Mortimer to the castle, where he was to be seized, and conveyed to the cavern; which was accordingly done.

Zelo was next examined; he gave evidence of the scene in the chapel, where Montano wounded Lord Mortimer, without having any warrant from the inquisition, and in which affray many had lost their lives.

Bernardo followed; he had known the monk a number of years, and enumerated many of his atrocities. In the course of his evidence, he implicated the abbess, and notes of his deposition against her, were taken separately, by Galaffron himself. Virginia was then sworn, and gave a circumstantial detail of her sufferings in the convent, and identified Montano as the person who had personated the prior on the

night of her trial, and who had afterwards passed the sentence of death. Here Lord Mortimer and his lady were again called, and, on being questioned, described Ellena's execution; of all which, minutes were entered. They were no sooner dismissed, than Eveline and Arabel were separately examined, and proved the cruelty with which they had been persecuted in the convent; and their testimony effectually ruined the abbess.

The next witness was Rourke, who was excessively surprised on being led into the hall; he gazed wildly round, and no sooner perceived Montano, than he said, "Arrah! you're welcome home, jewel!—I suppose you are soon to be with your *oul* master, who is just where he ought to be."—Here he was interrupted by a familiar, who, in a whisper, ordered him to be silent, if he valued his life. At this he seemed much amazed, but made no reply; and in a moment after, when desired to repeat the oath, exclaimed—"Och! I can't

“speak not a word ; for if I do, this black Turk at my elbow will stop my *wizen*.” Galafron now, in a voice that made him start, commanded him to repeat it, which he had no sooner done, than he spit out, shrugged his shoulders, looked at the monk, and apparently wished for his black thorn. At length, his examination began with the usual question—“What is your name?”

“Tom Rourke; and from the north of Ireland, at your service.”

“Do you know Montano de Gaspard, a Dominican monk?”

“Och! hushla-ma-chree, is it game you’re making?—know the monk?—*bim* my soul that’s no bad joke.”

Galafron did not understand this sort of answer, and the question was again put.

“Know him! arrah, do you think I don’t know my left hand from my right? Yes! I know him to be the biggest blackguard that ever crossed himself.”

The inquisitors now sent for Lord

Mortimer, to act as interpreter, as Tom's English, Irish, and Spanish, jumbled together, were totally unintelligible. On his lordship's appearing, the examination recommenced; but, as this witness knew very little, his answers are not worth relating; his evidence being only corroborative with respect to Montano's landing in England; Gonzales' declaration; the scene in the chapel; and escape from the Dominican convent. Albert was examined to the same facts. Then Donna Louisa; her evidence was the most conclusive and convicting, if we except that of Bolerno, at whom the monk fired, and in whose presence he killed Geraldine. Williams was the last witness, and if Rourke was unintelligible, he was ten times worse. On being desired to explain the scene in the cell where Montano had chained Alexena to the post, and was about to sacrifice her, he thus described it:—"Do you see; I hap'd to be under hatches, when this

pirate broached his foul weather plan, for boarding that little skiff; trusting fear would oblige her to strike her colours; and that dead shark there, (pointing to Acasto,) who is now in a brimstone latitude, cheered him on; so when the lubber fired a gun to bring her too, and saw that she hauled up a stout spirit, and determined to give battle while she had a timber standing, he commanded his mamelukes to pour in a broadside; but I, seeing her about to sink, drifted in odd rigging on their starboard quarter, and they taking me for a fire-ship, soon cleared the deck; aye, aye! they cut cable—crowded all sail, and left that dog-fish sprawling with his lee jaw broken by a bomb shot. Damn my eyes! I would have closed his cabin lights, had not our commodore Don Miguel, shouted *avast!* and run him aground between two scuttled hulks.” Our heroine listened to this detail, with tearful eyes, and could scarce explain the gallant tar’s meaning, being so much affected by the kindness and

bravery which he had so nobly displayed in the moment of danger; for had he been discovered, instant death must have followed.

Williams could not behold her tears unmoved; he knew the source from which they flowed, and comprehended the feelings that summoned them. Therefore, having tossed his quid from one jaw to the other, with great rapidity, he exclaimed, "Why this foul weather; cheer up! the storm's blown by; we sail right before the wind, so, no more of these salt-water pearls." Alexena smiled through her tears, and Williams observed, "Aye, aye! that's right; sunshine and rain betokens a fair day. Come captain," he continued, addressing Lord Mortimer, "tow her on deck, as this here hold is rather raw, and she's only fit for summer gales;—no disparagement lady, God bless your heart."

"My good friend, no offence whatever," replied our heroine, "receive

my most sincere and grateful thanks, and believe me, I will feel most happy, if you will remain with my lord, who will return to England next month, and where, I trust, you will allow us to make the remainder of your life comfortable." Williams was about to burst into a string of ejaculations, when they were all ordered to be silent, and shortly after were permitted to withdraw.

When Lord Mortimer had retired, Galafron read the depositions of the witnesses, and after a few moments consultation, passed sentence of death on the two wretched criminals; in a most impressive manner, he enumerated their several offences; dwelt on their horrible nature, extent, and atrocity; reverted to the dreadful punishments that awaited them hereafter, unless they sincerely repented, and concluded, by saying, "That the doors of mercy were shut on them for ever in this world; then ordered them to be executed at

twelve o'clock the following night. Where then were Montano's airy-built castles? they had vanished, leaving him a prey to all the torments of a guilty conscience. In the gloom of his dungeon, bitter recollection held a mirror before his half-distracted fancy, in which he beheld those who had fallen by his hand, and those whose ruin he had caused by nameless wiles and treachery; remorse for a moment visited his flinty couch; but the catalogue of his crimes was of such excessive length, that hope forsook him, ere he had scanned one half its contents; desperation followed, and he would have closed the scene by suicide, had not two familiars sat in his cell, to prevent any attempt of that nature. Zelo attended both him and Torquo alternately, but they were incorrigible; the latter, indeed, appeared to await his approaching death with much less fortitude than the monk, and seemed to expect some dreadful torments; he was apparently insensible to the kind

exhortations of the good father, who explained with great feeling, the boundless extent of God's mercy ; tried to impress his mind with an idea of future rewards and punishments ; besought him to repent, but he continued immovable, until a few hours previous to his execution, when he was induced to repeat several prayers ; yet, at the conclusion of each, observed, they would be of no avail, that he knew his doom was sealed, and that years of penitence could not save him ; his thoughts were tinged with despair of the blackest hue, and he even wished for death to end his mental misery ; however, before the fatal hour arrived, his worthy confessor had succeeded in soothing his spirit to a degree of composure that could not have been expected.

Time glides rapidly—the day passed—night returned—the clock tolled eleven—and the men of death entered Montano's dungeon to strike off his

irons, preparatory to the awful moment. On their arrival, he appeared much agitated; but before his limbs were freed from the fetters, he seemed to have collected strength to meet his fate with fortitude; but this assumed courage vanished on being led into the deep and dreary dungeons of the castle; his eyes roamed over their dark solitudes, in ghastly earnestness, particularly when he distinguished the roaring of the subterranean torrent; its horrors were, as yet, unknown, and he gazed wildly round, wishing to ascertain the cause of the almost deafening din that assailed his ears; at first, conceiving it was a noise occasioned by the dashing of the sea against the rocks, and that he was to be led through some passage which communicated with the foaming surge; to be there shot, and thrown into its angry waves. But who can pretend to describe his horror, on beholding the real cause from the hall that overlooked the terrific cataract? The little boat was already at the steps; a kind

of platform was fastened to the iron barrier, and the draw-bridge below was distinguishable by the light of two torches, which almost touched the waters that impetuously rushed under it. There Montano comprehended the extent of the horrible fate the inquisitors had prepared for him; and Galafron stood on the rocky bank, until he was bound, and placed in the crazy vessel appointed to convey him and the executioners to the platform. Numbers of the banditti had assembled on the bridge; many were gazing through the dripping roof; others hanging on the frightful precipices, in momentary danger of being dashed to pieces. The stream rushed over the rocks with unusual fury; the torches flared in the gloomy distance, and the countenances of the rude spectators of this dismal scene, were expressive of the awe which chilled each bosom. When the boat had arrived at the fatal spot, Montano was placed on the platform, and from thence beheld the jaws of destruction

open to receive him. It was a moment of horror ; for a wild cry startled all present, and on the monk turning his eyes to ascertain the cause, he saw Torquo lowered by a rope, with his hands and feet tied together, who, as he screamed and struggled, twisted his distorted form to gaze on the black gulph into which he was about to be precipitated. The former now forgot his own situation on observing his fellow-sufferer ; but for him he felt no compassion ; on the contrary, he grinned with satisfaction, on the executioner drawing his sabre, for the purpose of cutting the frail cord by which he was suspended ; but a deep groan, accompanied by a sudden flash of light, drew his attention to the bridge, and he there beheld the decayed figure of Hugo rise from the deep, with a scroll in his right hand, which he held so close to one of the torches, that the writing could be accurately distinguished ; and Montano's blood froze on reading those words—

“Hugo waits to conduct his master to the mansions of darkness !” He trembled ; the cold perspiration fell from his agitated brows into the dark waters of the gulph. Galafron gave the dread signal ; the rope was severed, and Torquo fell headlong into the rugged deep ; the plunge made the cavern ring, and his last moan ascended as Hugo’s body sunk, while the impatient soul of Montano fluttered in his bosom, willing to relinquish its polluted tenement, rather than endure such harrowing sights. The inquisitors now uncovered their heads, and the executioners disrobed the monk, and then returned in the boat to the hall. All eyes were fixed on him ; his fate was inevitable, and while he yet gazed on the surrounding horrors, the remains of Acasto descended, and stood beside him. Montano’s hands were at that time unbound ; he laid them on Philip’s shoulders, and held him from him ; but the cord by which the latter was lowered being cut, he fell into the monk’s arms, and the

same instant the platform turned over, plunging both into the foaming abyss, where the former was dashed to pieces ; no trace of either ever appeared, and we hope their vices, like themselves, will be forgotten ; or, if remembered, only with abhorrence, accompanied by a sincere desire, that such monsters may never again degrade the human form.

CHAP. V.

“ Love is a smoke rais’d with the fume of sighs ;
Being purg’d, a fire sparkling in lovers’ eyes
Being vex’d, a sea nourish’d with lovers’ tears :
What is it else ? A madness most discreet,
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.”

ROM. & JUL.

THE execution of Montano and his vile associate made a deep and lasting impression on all those who had witnessed it, and assisted in reconciling them to the change which was about to take place. Don Miguel and his friends were ignorant of what sentence had been passed on their enemies, until the day after they were no more, and from that hour every individual in the castle carefully avoided mentioning their names, so that in a week they were apparently forgotten.

Before Galafron left Santa Marco, he ordered every individual to remain in it for one month, on pain of incurring the displeasure of the holy tribunal, as

he said it might be necessary for many among them to give personal testimony against the abbeſs of the Dominicans; but this mandate of the inquisitor gave little uneaſineſs, as the entire party were too happy to think of ſeparating ſo ſoon, and ſome among them could not bear the idea, without ſuffering certain unpleasant ſenſations, inflicted by the arrows of the little blind god. Among thoſe, were Louiſa and Velasco, who were conſtantly ſeen on the beach, while Louiſa and Don Celio amused themſelves in rambling through the delightfully romantic paths oppoſite the caſtle. Zorayda played enchantingly both on the guitar and harp, ſo that Don Miguel was ſeldom to be found abſent from the muſic-room, and Alexena, with her Mortimer, generally paſſed their morning in the library, either drawing, or reading to each other. Happineſs and content ſhone on the countenance of every individual in Santa Marco. Don Selib

looked forward, with much satisfaction, to an union between Lucinda and his son, being already very much attached to that lovely girl, whose beauty was the least of her perfections; she was a descendant of one of the first families in Spain, related to the prince, possessed of an ample fortune, and though not so delicately beautiful as her sister Zorayda, had many brilliant attractions. Celio loved her with boundless affection, and very soon became a favourite suitor. Her father, Don Alonzo, approved of her choice, and made them happy.

Don Miguel had no reason to complain; his manners were irresistible, and in a short time Zorayda's bosom heaved with that most undefinable of sensations—love; and there was not many females in Spain, nay, we shall only except our heroine, who was so likely to inspire that delightful passion; gracefully tall in her person, with a figure every way faultless; fine hazle-

coloured eyes; her hair jetty black; her complexion fair; her voice soft and languishing, accompanied with a bewitching smile, that played round a mouth of inexpressible beauty; in fact, every movement gave an interest which found the way to his heart; he was the most enamoured of men, the most respectful of lovers, tremblingly alive to anticipate her wishes, and to prevent the possibility of the most trivial of them remaining ungratified. Oh! he was

“ ————— All made of fantasy,
All made of passion, and all made of wishes;
All adoration, duty, and observance;
All humbleness, all patience, and impatience;
All purity, all trial, all observance.”—

And ere the expiration of a month, was the happiest individual in the castle.

Every succeeding day brought new visitors, many of whom were Don Miguel's most distinguished friends, and among them our eccentric character, Don Raphiel de Agrillo, deserves

notice ; he was a man of rare talents, accomplished, blessed with the best of hearts, yet, notwithstanding, was excessively crabbed and morose, particularly with those who affected any virtue which they really did not possess ; such persons were sure of receiving no mercy, and seldom a day passed without giving him an opportunity of annoying them. Alexena and Zorayda were his favourites, and he generally allowed them to lean on his arm for an hour every evening, which was considered by all his acquaintances, as a most extraordinary piece of condescension, and proved beyond a possibility of doubt, that those ladies were endowed with matchless excellence. During his plethoric fits, he was exceedingly diverting ; all his observations were well applied ; but his sarcasms, though humorous, were rather severe.

About three weeks after Don Miguel's restoration, he sent cards of invitation for a grand masked ball, to which were invited every family of distinction in

St. Sebastian, Pampeluna, and Saragossa; this entertainment promised much gratification, particularly to Don Raphiel, who was resolved to tease all those who deserved it, without distinction, and from the diversity of characters; he promised himself ample satisfaction for the torrents of abuse with which he had been mercilessly loaded. In the castle, splendid preparations were made, and with every part of them, our cynic was sure to find a thousand faults. "The emblematic figures were without meaning; the artificial flowers, like any thing but nature; the masks villanously executed; the dresses abominable; the company invited, all fools; and Don Miguel, a downright madman." He understood English, and spoke it fluently; therefore, generally conversed with Mortimer in that language, and seldom smiled, except when listening to Alexena's lisping attempts at the pronunciation of it. She infinitely amused him; her playful

innocence won his heart ; and in the whole of his careful observance of her manners, he saw nothing with which he could be displeased. “ You are too forgiving,” he would sometimes say, “ but, nevertheless, I must love you, that is, I mean—I mean——pugh!—ridiculous !”

“ Me don’t like you,” Alexena replied, “ you be so much sulky.”

“ No jabber now,” observed Don Raphiel. “ Speak Spanish.”

“ Me much like English.”

“ Aye, because it is your clumsy husband’s language.”

“ Ah! ah! you be ver’ merry.”

“ Not I!—confounded folly! it makes me sick.”

“ Vil ye be sad?”

“ Yes, how can I be otherwise, when I am in company with such idiots, who scarce know how to laugh at each other?”

“ Vake out of it then.”

“ I will ; and as I would fain believe

you have some sense, I shall take you with me."

"And me vil take Mortimer."

"Oh, yes! but you would have been better without such an incumbrance; however, as he is not the most incorrigible ass here, you may bring him along."

His lordship laughed, and having drawn an arm of his beautiful bride through his, accompanied Don Raphiel to the adjacent precipices, which commanded one of the finest views of the country and the bay. While they wandered along the coast, our heroine was highly entertained with the observations of her sulky companion, whom even the beauties of nature could scarce please; but their attention was diverted from this subject by the sound of voices very nigh them, and on peeping over the projection of a rock, they beheld Don Miguel at the feet of Zorayda, pouring out the effusions of a love-sick heart, and she listening with approving smiles and blushes. Lord Mortimer

and his lady would have made a precipitate retreat, had not Don Raphiel held both; and while the lover continued speaking, Raphiel's physiognomy was most laughable, and it was not without the utmost difficulty his lordship could prevent him from disturbing the *tete-a-tete*.

"Merciful powers!" he exclaimed, "did you ever hear such stuff as this silly Jack-o'-th'-Lantern is filling that languishing lady's brains with? Before heaven, I should not be surprised, if he imagined himself a second Apollo; aye, and Miss Zorayda, a Daphne; only she seems much more inclined to sit than run away.—Charming thought! how delightful to tumble from those cliffs—be changed into a river, and mingle with the waves of Biscay!"

"Vere ye ever in love?" demanded Alexena.

"Vos I ever in bedlam?" said he, mimicing.—"No! not quite so mad as to sing sonnets to the moon, dash myself against rugged precipices, tear

my hair out in handfuls, insult my friends, bake myself in the sun, and then blow my brains out."

"Lovers are seldom so frantic, believe me," observed his lordship, laughing.

"Aye, but they are though. How often have I seen such bamboozled automatons move along, like scarecrows, to some sunny bank, and there sink beneath a load of imaginary misery; then, stretched at full length, enumerate their several woes, beginning with the last frown or scornful look of their mistresses, who, in all probability, at the moment, were wasting their beauty, if they had any, over a chess-board or gaming-table."

"You be odious man, and our sex vil hate you."

"Yes, for stating facts; women hate to hear the truth; but was not this the case, we should have no marriages, for a man must tell a thousand lies, and swear to them, before any of you will tell him one in return, which is no more

than that you are content to have the poor devil for an husband."

They were now at the draw-bridge, where Virginia met them, with word that Galafron had returned, accompanied by Anselmo, Isabel, and Madeline, with the abbess of the Dominicans and two nuns, prisoners. Alexena was greatly shocked at this intelligence, being aware the latter had been brought to be tried, and that escape was utterly impossible, when such witnesses as Eveline, Arabel, Bernardo, and herself, should appear against her.

Don Raphiel soon learned the character of the abbess, but refrained from making any observations; he was too noble-minded to "load the fallen;" on the contrary, he ventured to join Don Miguel and the ladies in her behalf; but the stern Galafron ordered all to be silent, as he was resolved to be entirely guided by evidence. She was accordingly tried, found guilty, and executed, by being conveyed in a boat a considerable way into the bay,

where two buoys were fastened to her person, and she was then flung into the waves to perish by birds of prey, who literally eat her alive. Thus perished Ursula de Baretto, the most cruel domina that ever disgraced a religious institution; her wealth was immense, and instead of saving, it hurried her to destruction. The crafty inquisitors divided the spoils which she had so infamously amassed—then destroyed her; and so may all tyrants perish!

In a few days after the trial of the abbess, Galafron pardoned the nuns, who, he said, merely acted under her influence, and rewarded the good Madeline, who had saved Virginia, by appointing her superior of the Dominican convent, to the great joy of every individual within its walls. The kind nun had incurred the displeasure of her late cruel predecessor, by interfering for Ellena, and was punished by many months solitary confinement. Father Zelo was appointed to a high

preferment in the church, but chose to remain as confessor to the family of his worthy benefactor ; and Don Miguel felt so extremely grateful for this proof of his unalterable attachment, that during the remainder of his life, he paid him every attention.

Before the inquisitors left the castle, they offered an immense sum for it, in order to settle within its walls a number of monks of the Benedictine order, who would shelter the distressed traveller, or wandering pilgrim, from the remorseless banditti which had for ages infested those mountains, and as a further inducement, they pledged themselves, it should for ever bear his name ; but Don Miguel knew the tribunal too well to place any reliance on their promises, therefore, declined their proposal in the gentlest terms, saying, “It was his intention to reside in it constantly during the summer months.” The inquisitors, however, were indefatigable, and finding that he would not part with it to them, commissioned others to

purchase it for his most Christian majesty, under pretence, that the king wished to convert it into a fortress, for the purpose of defending those seas from pirates. But this offer he also declined, and Galafron returned without effecting this desirable point. Its gloomy dungeons and subterranean caverns would have been an excellent place to torture or confine the Moors ; and this was the abominable use for which it was intended ; these were the pilgrims and travellers the inquisitors wished to shelter ; these were the wretches that were to be protected from the banditti ; however, the halls of Santa Marco were saved from such pollution, and would for ages have braved the storm, had it not been for the cruelty of those remorseless vipers, who, in a short time destroyed this ancient seat of hospitality, where joy and merriment had been constant guests, and where food and fire was administered to those whose wants required it.

A few days previous to that appointed for the masquerade, Don Miguel won the final consent of the beautiful Zoyrada, and had no sooner obtained it, than he waited on Don Raphiel, whom he requested to accompany him to the altar.

“Is it I? are you really serious?” he exclaimed, evidently surprised.

“Certainly; I know few bachelors whom I esteem so much—none more.”

“By my honour,” observed Agrillo, “if you prevail, I should not wonder if I follow your example, and become a Benedict myself.” Clarissa’s cousin, a fine animated girl, was at this moment standing opposite him, and he fixed his eyes with so much meaning on her face, that she almost sunk with confusion.

“Eh! girl,” he inquired, “why so much rogue?—by my life, I believe this castle’s enchanted, and that you are the sorceress; for since these walls received you, I am most strangely altered.” Isabella now turned to withdraw, but Don Raphiel detained her;—“You

must not go, Donna, until you say I am forgiven ; for world's I would not offend you."

"By all that's wonderful," exclaimed Selib, "I believe you are serious, if so, Isabella should be proud of having made a conquest of a man who has resisted the beauties of Spain these fifteen years."

"Thank you, Selib ; but you give me credit for too much." Isabella, with difficulty, escaped from this raillery, but the instant she disappeared, Raphiel declared, he most sincerely loved her, and earnestly begged Don Miguel's interference in his behalf. Nothing could exceed the surprise of all present, and no unfortunate lover was ever more unmercifully teased ; but he displayed infinite good humour, so much so, that his best friends scarce knew him, and in a very few days, actually obtained Isabella's consent. Velasco was equally successful. Celio had won the heart of Lucinda, with the mutual consent of both their parents, and after a most

joyful consultation, it was mutually agreed "by and between the aforesaid parties," that those four happy couple should be married on the same day. The auspicious morning at length arrived; the blushing brides were led to the altar, and it would be difficult to decide which was the prettiest; yet if a decision could be made, Zorayda was certainly entitled to the preference. But our heroine stood peerless, and while present, all others seemed forgotten by the numerous and gay assemblage which now crowded the castle. This day passed happily, though tediously, the lovers having wished for night, an hundred thousand times. Oh!

"Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Tow'rs Phœbus' mansion; such a waggoner
As Phæton would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love performing night!
That run-away's eyes may wink;"—

For—

"Lovers can see to do their am'rous rites
By their own beauties."

Night, at length, wearied by their supplications, gathered the bright god of day beneath her dusky wings, and ere the twelfth hour, the lovers had reached the zenith of earthly bliss.

CHAP. VI.

“ His nature is too noble for the world :
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for his power to thunder. His heart’s his
mouth :

What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent.”

COR.

LOVE and joy waited on the brides, as their respective husbands led them, “ in beauty, blushing like an April morn,” to the breakfast-parlour, where they happily met to congratulate each other on having attained the height of human felicity. Don Raphiel, though a most attentive groom, had not altogether forgotten his old habits ; yet managed his satirical humour with such adroitness, that it gave infinite entertainment ; and the second day after, a vast number of strangers being expected, he resolved to indulge it.

On the night of the masquerade, Don Raphiel promised to give our heroine a sketch of the different characters, as

they passed from one suite of rooms to another, and appointed a convenient spot for the purpose. The masks began to assemble at an early hour, and before eleven o'clock, the apartments were crowded. Alexena was dressed as a shepherdess, her attire simply beautiful; Zorayda was habited as a gipsy; Lucinda, as a sultana; Louisa, as a nun; Virginia, as a flower girl; Eveline, as a duenna; Arabel, as a ballad-singer; Don Miguel assumed the character of an inquisitor; Don Raphiel, that of a fortune-teller; Lord Mortimer, as a knight-errant; Carlos, as a monk of the order of St. Dominic; Celio, as a muleteer; Velasco, as a huntsman. The remainder of our friends wore plain dominos; but among the motley group were kings, queens, princesses, devils, bravos, cheesemongers, fruiterers, sailors, tinkers, players, friseurs, courtiers, demerips, harlequins, gipsys, nuns, and other characters innumerable, each attentively seeking the goddess Pleasure. Among such a throng,

Raphael could not fail finding many deserving censure, and was not many minutes seated in a recess, which our heroine had converted into an artificial arbour, before he began to entertain her with their faults and foibles. The first who passed was a friar, with an enormous paunch, and Raphael exclaimed—"See that overgrown porpoise; he is a rich alcade, having a fortune of twenty thousand crowns per annum, which has been amassed—heaven knows how! There is not a more ignorant or uncharitable dog in Spain; to be poor is, in his opinion, to be a rogue, and such he is sure to punish, guilty or not."

"Me don't like him," observed Alexena, in English.

"Well, look here, that slim figure, who, by her habit, we are to suppose is a devotee, is really one of the most affected coquettes in Europe; she has a considerable share of beauty; but her manners are so disgusting, that in

a few moments you imagine you are in company with a monster."

"Be you not ver' severe?" demanded his attentive companion.

"No, truly; but, hush! here comes a flashy captain; one of the most ar-rant cowards that ever wore a sword; he has been in one or two skirmishes, in consequence of which, it appears to be his belief, none are more valiant; though it is pretty generally whispered he ran away, and that his connexion alone saved him from well-merited disgrace.

"Do good so be to let him pass."

"Aye, with all my heart; we have had too much of him already."

"Who be this pretty smart figure?"

"Oh! this is one of our learned ladies—the greatest plague in existence. She drags her knowledge of history, geography, politics, &c. head foremost into every conversation, no matter whether foreign to the subject in discussion or not. The other day,

for instance, an eminent physician observed, that a certain young female of my acquaintance was rapidly consuming by a decline, when Miss here, not aware of his profession, instantly contradicted him, by saying, “La Signior, you mistake the poor thing’s complaint; I can prove to a demonstration, it is nothing more than a nervous fever, caught from a severe cold. She then entered into a learned description of diseases, and concluded, in my mind, very ridiculously; all present thought so too; but if any one had opposed her, she would not have ceased babbling yet.”

“Me have enough of her.—Pray now who is this that talks so incessantly?”

“Mercy on me!—this is one of the greatest pests of society—a gossip; a small-talk vender, a dealer in characters, a scandalous chronicle, a she-devil in petticoats. From the hour she rises, until fatigue closes her ferret eyes, her tongue is busy propagating mis-

chief. What is said in this house she will grossly pervert into a different meaning, and as her various inclinations prompt, repeat to the credulous, to the ill-natured, or envious, as facts, which they believe, or pretend to believe, and tell to others, with innumerable additions."

"I vil hate the world two times more than imagine you, if you can't prove me some be good."

"Ah! ha! you speak English like a parrot; I should not like to have the trouble of making you pronounce it *much good*, (mimicing.)

"Vel, me not mind.—Say who be dis frisseur?"

"That is a butterfly—a moth—a senseless powder-monkey, who thrusts himself into all companies—flutters about the females—talks scandal—hems handkerchiefs—composes washes for the fair—combs old Tabby's lap-dogs—kills characters by the gross—and is despised and laughed at for his pains."

“ Oh, my!—he be worst yet.”

“ Aye, but here comes a cheese-monger ; how different his real occupation! (I should say profession,) being a quack, an apothecary, a vender of poison by wholesale and retail ; but withal, a useful member ; he hides the frailty of numbers of your sex, where they are seldom discovered—I mean in the grave. He has two or three sovereign remedies for all diseases, which he applies indiscriminately. If they cure, it is well ; if they kill, it saves farther trouble. He has sent many passengers to Charon these some years past, and as the most of them are females, it is but reasonable he should expect a pretty storm about his ears the moment he crosses Styx.”

“ Let him begone, and say who this bravo be?”

“ He is a country squire, with scarce a rial's worth of brains—a mere boar-hunter, more brutal in his manners than the beasts which constitute his

game; overbearing, oppressive, tyrannical to a degree, over those unfortunates whom relentless fate has subjugated to his galling yoke; and sneakingly mean and submissive to his superiors in wealth and power.—I wonder how he found admission here!”

“Well, he be hateful character;—who is this nun?”

“I feel pleasure in being able to gratify you.—She is the mother of a fine family, and one of the most inestimable of women. Another time, and I shall give you a detail of her numberless virtues.”

“I should much like introduce.”

“Very well; I will endeavour to gratify you, but can’t at present, as I wish to discover a figure, who, from the slowness of his gait, seems to be advanced in years, and is habited as an itinerant showman. Yonder knight-errant, if I mistake not, is your husband, and seems much disturbed by

the representation.—Come, let us see what it means.”

Don Raphael then led our heroine where Lord Mortimer was standing, and as she advanced, his agitation was apparent. Our cynic now begged to have a peep, and offered the feigned showman money. His voice was known, and Zelo (for it was he,) caught him by the arm, and pointing to the glass, in a suppressed voice, bid him look quickly. He did, and to his unspeakable terror, beheld a villain, in the robes of an inquisitor, in the act of firing a train of gun-powder, which was represented as concealed in the vaults of the castle.”

“Oh, merciful heaven! my good Zelo, what is the meaning of this dreadful picture?”

“We are all on the brink of destruction; find Don Miguel, if possible, and retreat to the western tower; descend the stairs by the trap-door you will find open; get on board the boat, and I will be with you as soon as I warn our

other friends; for to give a general alarm would be the inevitable ruin of us all."

Raphael turned to protect Alexena, and seek for his wife; but the former was gone, and Mortimer had vanished. Distracted, he rushed into the adjoining rooms, where he met Isabella and Celio; mentioned their horrid situation, and sent the latter in search of Lucinda and the other ladies. Zelo, in the meantime had the good fortune to meet Don Miguel, who no sooner understood their impending danger, than he exclaimed—" 'Tis the bloody work of Galafron, who is here in a mask: seek our dear friends, and let them be conveyed to the place of rendezvous, while I endeavour to prevent this dreadful calamity." He then hastened away, and almost flew towards the subterraneans; but was petrified with amazement, on finding Alexena quietly following the infernal inquisitor to inevitable ruin. "Lady Mortimer,"

he hoarsely murmured, "Why tread in the footsteps of Satan?" Galafron turned, and beheld Don Miguel, habited in the robes of the holy tribunal; he knew not what to think, but conceiving he was discovered, extinguished his lamp, and retreated through one of the private passages. To attempt overtaking him would be little less than madness; therefore, the former prudently resolved to return to the rooms, seize the casket wherein his treasures was deposited, and fly to the brigantine, which lay close under the walls.

Lord Mortimer, in his anxiety to save Zorayda, Louisa, Arabel, &c. forgot Alexena, who foolishly let go his arm, on being beckoned to by the inquisitor, and who, by his dress, she mistook for Don Miguel. On his lordship turning to request she would not stir from his side, judge his consternation, on finding she was not even in the same apartment. Wretched, frantic beyond conception, he rudely pressed through the crowd, and was about to call her, when he

was again met by Zelo, who told him she was safe, and commanded him, as he valued her existence, to hasten to the tower.

During these eventful moments, Rourke and Williams had stolen into a corner, where they diverted each other with the most extraordinary observations that likely were ever uttered, and, luckily, were reconnoitered by the good father as he passed ; their late merriment was woefully changed by his communication, and in less than five minutes they were in the tower, accompanied by Henriquez and Albert. There the unfortunate Don Miguel harangued them in broken whispers, naming each, and after commending them to the protection of heaven, he descended a cylindrical flight of stairs, cut in the rock, the lower steps of which were washed by the swelling surge, on which a boat lay tossing, and into it he lifted his fainting wife. Mortimer and Alexena followed ; Velasco and Louisa next, and after them, every individual

about whose welfare we are immediately interested, accompanied by a very few strangers. The boat was so heavily laden, that she scarcely cleared the water; however, a gentle breeze promised to carry them in safety to the brigantine, which they hoped had escaped their cruel enemies; but this last refuge was denied, unless they fought and conquered; arms, they had none, and the lights on board, too truly proved she was manned; every moment their vessel gained on her, and should they be discovered, one cannon shot would bury them in the deep; they dare not use an oar; every one looked to Williams for relief, who sat like a stoic, apparently unconcerned, but was in reality their sheet anchor.

“Can any one swim here?” he demanded; “if so, let him drop overboard with me, and we can enter by the cabin windows, knock those sharks o’ the head, and save this precious freight; if not, let Don Miguel or Lord Mortimer come to the helm, and I’ll go alone.”

“I can swim like a *herren*,” whispered Rourke, and dive like a dolphin, so tumble in and we’ll bother them.” There was no time to lose, the inquisitors had withdrawn, and the languid flame of their lanterns was distinguishable, moving along the beach; lights were also visible in a large galley, which was ready to get under weigh in a moment; and if our terrified adventurers did not succeed before they boarded her, all was lost.

“What’s keeping you, Williams?” said Rourke.

“No jaw rope, but drift ahead;” he replied, “I’m in already.”

“God bless you, my friends,” said Don Mignel, “I would be with you, if I could swim.” Lion now became uneasy, and Lord Mortimer let him gently into the water; then declared his determination of assisting his servant, and, notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of the ladies, particularly our heroine, he jumped into the water, and swam after the dog to the brigan-

tine. The night was exceeding dark, and had it not been for the lights on board, our distressed fugitives would have found it extremely difficult to discover her; but Providence assisted them in every thing, for Williams gained the cabin window, and had entered before his lordship appeared; he and Rourke then hauled him up, and as all within was silent, they groped about in search of arms, and luckily found two carbines and a cutlass. The boys were in bed in a little room adjoining, and them they easily secured; then cautiously crept upon deck, where the men were walking, expecting the return of their companions, who had gone to assist the inquirers. Their lanterns served to point them out, and before they could make the slightest resistance, were all seized, bound, and conveyed to the hold. Don Miguel, in the mean time, ran the boat along side, and the ladies were quickly assisted on deck, from which they

retired to the cabin, where Albert prepared a fire, and procured lamps.

It was now necessary to get under weigh with all possible dispatch. Williams took the command, and was as promptly obeyed as the first admiral of the British fleet ; his orders were issued in low whispers, as the galley was too close to admit of their conversing freely ; and in ten minutes they stood out from the shore, having cut their cables ; poor Bill had very indifferent seamen, but their good-will made amends for their want of knowledge, and his little vessel had got a-head of the enemy's ship, above a cannon shot, before they observed the lights of the inquisitors glide rapidly along the beach. The faint plashing of oars was now heard, and instantly after the destructive train was fired, in less than half a minute the castle blew up with a dreadful noise, for a moment illuminating the surrounding woods and sea coast ; large beams of burning timber, and numbers of scorched and mutilated bodies, fell round

the vessels ; the groans of the many wounded were wafted from the shore ; while the piercing shrieks and wild cries of those who had escaped rent the air. Numbers had been alarmed, by a few mysterious hints which fell from Zelo, and instantly withdrew ; these and their attendants, with several of the baud, who had been informed of their danger, had luckily passed the draw-bridge time enough to avoid inevitable destruction.

The burning pile quickly discovered the retreat of our adventurers, which was no sooner observed by Galafron, than he commanded them to be pursued. Williams now crowded all the sail he could muster, but finding it would not do, the guns were loaded, and the deck cleared for action ; as every man on board had solemnly sworn to conquer or perish. The ladies were busily employed heating balls, with which Captain Williams hoped to fire the rigging of the galley, and in twenty minutes they were within pistol shot.

The brigantine had the advantage of the wind, but the enemy had more hands, and a larger vessel, besides their men were trained ; however, to fight they were resolved, and Bill seemed confident of victory. "Come, lads," he shouted, "clap the jigger tackle to your spirits, and off with the muzzle lashings—batter their hull—splinter the deck—come, scud away my hearties—already the enemy hardly know their fore-sheet from the maintop bow-line."

The yards were secured ; the bulldogs ready ; and being now muzzle to muzzle, the brigantine poured in a broadside in gallant style. This confused the inquisitors, who had not an idea of meeting with resistance ; but were most disagreeably undeceived ; Rourke fought desperately ; between every broadside, he bawled—"Bow-wow!—what spattering!—rake them starboard and larboard—more cartridges—blow them up ! That's my honies ! (to the cannon,) speak out !"

“Do you see,” cried Bill, “they sheer off already.—Now for a red-hot ball in their powder-room.”

Albert, at this moment, received a severe wound in the hand, and one of the inquisitorial seamen, who had been previously liberated to assist in the action, had his head carried away by a cannon shot.

Lord Mortimer anxiously inquired who was wounded?

“Your servant,” replied Williams; “but he has only got his ticklers smashed; send him down to have them foddered by the ladies, as they must be our surgeons now.”

The galley, by this time, had set all her canvas; but kept firing as she retreated.

“Ah! ah!” cried the captain, “me knowed she’d start about. Point well; take time, and bear a hand—that’s it!”

Here Williams ordered a discharge of several red-hot shot and shells, which did considerable execution, and

in five minutes more the enemy's rigging was in flames. The scene was horrible beyond description ; the brigantine ceased firing, and bore away, as the galley was expected to blow up. In a quarter of an hour, this actually happened, and the explosion was beyond conception dreadful ; some few had thrown themselves into the sea, and were picked up in a short time after by our noble crew—two of whom were sailors, one a monk, and these only survived."

Don Miguel, Velasco, Celio, and Williams, were wounded severely ; Lord Mortimer, Antonio, Rourke, and Albert, slightly ; Henriquez and Pedrillo, dangerously ; one seaman killed, and one mortally wounded, who died next day. Vasquez, Selib, &c. escaped unhurt, though they were in the middle of the fire ; and the ladies, who had been almost lifeless with fear during the action, were now busily engaged dressing the wounded. No-

thing could exceed the steadiness, courage, coolness, and bravery, of every individual; and Williams swore they deserved fair weather, light breezes, and a smooth sea, until the High Admiral of all should waft them aloft!

On a consultation the following morning, it was deemed advisable to steer towards the coast of France, there procure a proper pilot, and then sail for old England,

“ ——— That pale, that white-fac’d shore,
Whose foot spurns back the ocean’s roaring tides,
And coops from other lands her islanders.”

and there Don Miguel resolved to reside, as he could not but detest his native country. Injury had been heaped on injury; the king had saved, but to deliver him to the inquisition. This was what he believed; but the fact was not so. However, the whole party conceived it unsafe to return to Spain, at least for some time; and, as both Sir Edmond and Lord

Mortimer pressed Don Miguel, Selib, Velasco, Celio, &c. to accompany them to Hollywood castle; they accepted the invitation.

On the third day, the brigantine anchored in a small creek on the French coast, in the vicinity of a sea-port town, from which they procured a pilot and provisions. Here M Santanelle, Theodore, and Arabel, parted with Alexena a second time, but not without many tears and prayers for her prosperity.

In a week the brigantine was once more at sea, well manned, and with every thing that could render her passengers comfortable. While they lay in the creek, the monk who had been picked up the night of the action, explained Galafron's reasons for blowing up the castle, and every particular connected with that most horrible event. He had been present at the restoration of Don Miguel, and afterwards left Santa Marco with Galafron.

On their return to Madrid, the inquisitor reported the success of his mission to the tribunal ; but was then almost petrified with horror, on hearing that he and Montano were brothers. This was a dreadful shock, as he had not only sat in judgment, and passed sentence, but afterwards witnessed his execution. Infuriated by a revenge the most diabolical, he resolved, at one blow, to destroy the innocent cause of his misfortune ; and having once conceived the terrible project, determined to carry it, or perish in the attempt. Nothing could be more artful than the plans laid for its accomplishment ; he having, in an elaborate speech, described the cruel persecution of the Dominican abbess ; her avarice and immense wealth ; the disgrace which the publicity of her actions had brought on all religious institutions, and gave it as his opinion, she should be tried in Santa Marco, and if guilty, punished with death ; then dwelt on the amiable

manners of Don Miguel, the popularity of his character, and the noble qualities of his heart ; saying, “ He could scarce grieve for the death of a brother who had caused so much misery.” He then repeated the entire of our heroine’s adventures, not concealing the slightest circumstance, and exposed Montano’s brutality in the most glaring colours ; this naturally led to observations on the construction of the subterranean caverns, their vast extent, and all their concomitant horrors ; which he represented as an acquisition that could not be too highly prized ; particularly, when its commanding situation, and vicinity to the sea, were duly considered ; and affirmed, that it was his belief, Don Miguel would dispose of it for less than one-fourth of its value.

The tribunal having at all times conceived Galafron a man of the deepest penetration, gladly embraced his advice, and a sum of money was accordingly ordered to be paid into his hands to complete the purchase, so with this treasure,

and the abbeſs his priſoner, he returned to Santa Marco. Every thing, in fact, ſucceeded beyond his moſt ſanguine hopes ; the tribunal had been deluded by the idea, that he eſteemed Don Miguel, and entertained an almoſt fatherly affection for Alexena ; this was juſt what he wiſhed, for he reſolved to blow up the caſtle, and convert the money to his own uſe. A forged deed of ſale could eaſily be procured, as thoſe who ſhould be ſuppoſed to have executed it, were to be buried in the ruins ; not a ſoul was to eſcape, and the moment he heard of the masquerade, his gloomy nature led him to fix on that night, as he would then have an opportunity of not only deſtroying Don Miguel, our heroine and her huſband, but their reſpective friends ; beſides, being conſcious that ſo great a calamity muſt cauſe a degree of confuſion, which would favour the eſcape of his vile aſſociates, (who were men of the moſt infamous character,) and who could

easily retire to a remote part of France, if necessary; if not, boldly venture to pursue their usual avocations.

Thus determined, Galafron arrived at Santa Marco, and after the abbess had been disposed of, this arch fiend made a proposal to Don Miguel, for the purchase of the castle, and would have been rejoiced had the latter sold it, as he could then have a proper instrument prepared, and the moment it was signed, perpetrate the monstrous crime. A few of Don Miguel's friends were to have been witnesses, and those might be saved from the general massacre; however, when he found that the noble owner would not comply with any terms, he hastened to execute his direful project. Having bade adieu, he hastened to St. Sebastian in disguise, and there procured a sufficient quantity of gunpowder for his purpose, and conveyed it to the vaults, where it was disposed of in such a manner, as left not a doubt of its effects. A galley was hired to furnish certain means of safety for him-

self and his bravos, and the brigantine was seized, to prevent the possibility of any of Don Miguel's friends availing themselves of this means of escape.

One of the wretched men who had been entrusted with this detestable plot, was, at an early period of his life, saved from an ignominious punishment, by the influence and interference of father Zelo ; and as that kind monk was among the proscribed, the gratitude of the ruffian induced him to protect this his former benefactor ; but, being sworn in the most solemn manner not to mention Galafron's plans to any human being, he, under the idea of keeping his faith inviolate, contrived to delineate the most striking parts of the terrible design, and enclose them in a small box. This done, he hastened to Zelo's apartment, who was then engaged in deep study, and there, by signs, explained the meaning of the pictures, and also gave him a mask, with a suitable disguise, desiring him

to save any friend among the company whom he thought proper. The distracted Zelo almost flew to the reception rooms, where he made such good use of the few moments which Providence had granted, that every individual of his friends escaped, except the informer, who shared his master's fate, in the explosion of the galley.

CHAP. VII.

“ Their sinking hearts unusual horrors chill :
And down their weary limbs thick dews distil ;
No ray of light their dying hope redeems !
Pregnant with some new woe each moment teems.”

FALCONER.

WHILE the brigantine was taking in provisions and water for her intended voyage, the wounds of Don Miguel and his friends rapidly amended, and before they left the coast of France, were able to walk on deck, and partake of some trifling amusements. On putting to sea again, it was determined they should land on the Spanish coast, and Don Vasquez, with Don Alonzo, were to hasten to Madrid, there sell their estates and other property, then return, join them, and all sail for England together. The avarice, cruelty, and persecution of Philip, since the death of his queen, had become insupportable ; and if Don Miguel returned without Galafron, it was much to be

feared, the king would deliver him to the inquisitors, who would demand their brother; and he was well assured, no account that could be given of the late fatal catastrophe would be attended to; on the contrary, when the tribunal should find that both he and his visitors had escaped, they would naturally conclude, the castle had been destroyed by him after he had received its value. His late wandering life and habits would stamp this supposition indelibly on their minds, and certain destruction was to be expected, not only by him, but by every other person who had witnessed the fatal event. These ideas on the subject, were suggested by Zelo, and met with the belief and approval of our travellers, who, immediately after, commissioned the two old gentlemen before mentioned, to return in disguise, dispose of their estates for whatever sum they would bring, and carry the money to Britain, where they might purchase others, without being tortured by the

idea of losing them, and their lives, with every whim of either the king or the priesthood

In less than three weeks, both Don Vasquez and Alonzo returned, after succeeding beyond their expectations; having disposed of the respective estates for the full value, and joined Don Miguel with the money, just at the moment their absence began to give the most serious alarm. All was now well, and when they had taken the precautions usually necessary on long voyages, they sailed for England—

“ This royal throne of kings, this sceptr'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-Paradise;
This fortress, built by nature for herself,
Against infection, and the hand of war ;”

and where they hoped to spend the remainder of their days in tranquillity and connubial happiness. But fate had not yet ceased to persecute them ; they had to encounter many evils, and among which, a storm was not the least trying.

However, they left the coast in high spirits, and with a fair wind.

The cabin was scarce large enough to accommodate the ladies; but they were satisfied to encounter every inconvenience rather than return to Spain, and the beloved society of their husbands yielded incalculable pleasures—joys far exceeding the pomp and ceremony of a court levee, or the dazzling brilliancy of a ball-room. In that small vessel they were the happiest of women; day succeeded day in innocent amusements; the chess-board, cards, and a few entertaining books, which Don Miguel had purchased in France, gave a pleasing variety; the ladies sung enchantingly, and were often accompanied by guitars; while Lord Mortimer, who performed extremely well on the flute, called forth celestial sounds, which, in a calm evening, charmed the senses.

They, at length, entered the British Channel, and at the decline of that day, the white rocks of Albion were faintly discernible in the distance. The

spirits of all were elevated to an unusual height, until the gathering clouds, and a few light squalls, somewhat alarmed their pilot, who, being an experienced seaman, ordered every necessary precaution to be taken, to prevent the threatening misfortune.

As it grew darker, the wind whistled through the shrouds, and the fears of the females were almost insupportable, particularly when the storm became violent; it was then the thundering voice of Williams rolled along the deck, animating the weary crew.

“ Reef top-sails,” he cries—“ run the clue lines—square the yards—damn your lubberly eyes, no dreaming!”

Every individual was in motion; but the squall having increased, the ship lay deep on her side, and alarmed Don Miguel, with all those on board, who were unacquainted with the terrors of an angry sea.

Again, Williams, in a voice equal to a speaking trumpet, shouted, “ Brail up the mizen—man the clue garnets—be

quick, quick!"—He was obeyed with promptitude; yet in despite of their exertions, the mainsail was torn to pieces.

"Come, *mounsier* pilot," he continued, "helm a weather."

The prow veers, they brace the foresail, and the squall having passed to leeward, the fears of our friends began to subside; but their joy was of short duration, the tempest increased, and despair began to shew her gloomy face. Lord Mortimer pressed the pilot for his opinion, which he gave after some hesitation; it was unfavourable;—"There are no hopes of better weather," he said, "and the darkness is fast increasing."

"Lower topsails," vociferated Bill, "slack the bow-lines and halyards; haul down the clue lines; hold tight; furl the sails; strike the top-gallant yards; send some travellers up the weather back stays—right, right!—our rigging's clear, but the gale increases, and it rains confoundedly."

A heavy shower now almost blinded the benumbed mariners, and the darkness became horrible; yet to have a moment's respite was impossible. Williams rushed through the hissing storm, from one end of the vessel to the other, applauding some and cursing others; but this was not a time to reason with him on the impropriety of swearing.

“ Reef courses, my gallant hearts, there's no danger; we don't value this puff o' wind a rope's end; our High Admiral aloft will send light presently, and belike will keep a watchful eye to the helm, so cheer up!”

Alexena ventured on deck several times, and exposed her delicate form to the rough kisses of the tempest. She, Zoyrada, and Louisa, frequently encouraged the men by their promises, and by the fortitude they displayed in this hour of peril; while Rourke, always as fearless as he was useful, was ever to be found where the danger required his aid; and having gained considerable

knowledge of the different ropes, sails, &c. was of infinite service.

Albert, from the severity of his late wound, was not able to do much, yet rendered all the assistance in his power ; but, the athletic figure of Don Miguel excited the attention, and even attracted the admiration of the crew, who were zealous to imitate an example of such patient suffering ; he had also been wounded in the action with Galafron's galley, yet that did not prevent his doing treble the duty of any man on board ; for though he was drenched with rain, bruised severely, with his hands lacerated in many places, he did not utter the slightest murmur ; on the contrary, animated all present by his steady conduct.

It was now twelve o'clock ; neither moon or stars were to be seen ; nature seemed convulsed ; a dangerous sea threatened to dash them on a leeward shore ; the sails were reefed, but if they should again hoist them, the dreadful pressure of the wind might

sink their trembling ship ; therefore, after deliberating, it was resolved, they should furl the courses, and reef the mizen. This was accordingly done, and gave some hopes, particularly, when Williams ordered the helm a-lee ; the prow then seemed to pursue the proper course, but the impetuous and angry surges, dashed in frightful rotation over the quivering deck, until it became necessary to throw the guns overboard, and this service was not effected without much toil and danger ; however, it seemed to afford relief, and revived their drooping spirits, until they were overwhelmed with a greater calamity than any that had yet happened ; the crazy vessel having sprung a-leak, their labours at the pumps became excessive ; their hearts sunk with horrors, and, at length, repeated fatigues made them weary of life.

When the dawn burst through the eastern sky, it found the crew forlorn, without hope, and almost without feeling ; the ladies were miserable beyond

conception, being benumbed with cold ; their garments drenched with the salt brine ; their husbands fainting with fatigue ; no help nigh ; a rocky shore, beaten by roaring breakers, and sea birds screaming with discordant notes, eager to seize and glut themselves with prey. They wearied Williams with useless questions, to which he was at length obliged to give this answer ; “ That all must inevitably perish, unless heaven sent some messenger to quell the insolence of the blustering winds, and smooth the surface of the deep.”

The ship soon struck upon a shelving bank, and the only hope then left, was to cut away the masts and rigging, and bind them with planks, oars, &c. to each other, by which a raft might be formed, that would carry the wretched crew to the wished-for land. To effect this with more ease, the stern was turned to westward, that every mast might fall towards the shore, when cut down,

and which all hands were then busily employed in effecting.

About six o'clock, there was a consultation held, and it was the unanimous opinion, that the vessel would go to pieces in less than an hour, and if something was not attempted for their immediate relief, the females, at least, could not escape a watery grave. They therefore were summoned on deck, and with the assistance of their respective lords, crawled to it. Oh! had our readers then beheld them, what a contrast they would have seen; pale, tired, trembling, almost convulsed with fears, they clung to the shattered cordage, and gazed with horror on the threatening surge, which lashed the sides of the sinking wreck with resistless impetuosity. The frowning shore was within a few fathoms length, but it rudely threatened to dash those to atoms, who should dare to invade its rugged beach. Don Miguel sat on the splintered boards, with his Zorayda in his arms, gazing sternly on the troubled

flood ; and Lord Mortimer, with our heroine reclining on his bosom, whose cold lips he pressed, as often as he could do so unobserved. The remainder of the ladies were scattered o'er the crazy vessel, weeping and beseeching heaven to spare their husbands, and vainly calling on the weary sailors to save them ; many of whom had already sunk, never to rise again, in fruitless attempts to reach the taunting land.

While all yet remained undetermined, a swell, almost mountain high, swept Alexena into the roaring deep ; and this misfortune was announced by a wild scream from the remaining sufferers, who knew not the moment when it should be their fate to follow. But Lord Mortimer saw the peril of his lovely wife, and dashed into the briny tide, followed by Rourke and Williams ; and the latter, though the last, first secured our sinking heroine, who, in despite of wind, waves, and the rocky beach, he bore in triumph to the shore.

Don Miguel could not swim, and on

seeing Alexena safe, he exclaimed, "Oh! now, of what value are all my endowments, when they cannot singly or united, save my wife." Then with a despairing look, which would have made fiends weep, cried, "My Zorayda, we shall perish, but let it be in each other's fond embrace." She sunk into his arms, and as he resigned himself to fate, besought heaven to soften the pangs of death, not for him, but for the dear partner of his heart. "Oh! exquisite misery!" he cried, "is it possible, that so many lonely and beloved women shall perish? is there no hope, no refuge left?"

The wreck still held together, but every moment became more feeble, and each succeeding minute, some of the dying crew fell from the masts into the groaning billows, and there slept in eternal silence.

When Lord Mortimer and Rourke reached the shore, they were quite exhausted, and it was not without the

greatest difficulty, they clambered up the craggy precipices ; but having at length gained the wished-for haven, they hastened to relieve their companions in misery. His lordship first raised the form of his insensible wife, and clasped her to his bosom ; her hair was loose, wet, and dishevelled ; her limbs almost stiff with cold, and all appearance of animation extinct ; but life had not fled, and a husband's love restored it.

On regaining her recollection, imagine her happiness, on beholding Zorayda and Louisa leaning over her, who were almost equally benumbed with cold and fear. Williams had rescued them from the remorseless deep, with the assistance of Lion, who had been his messenger four times to the wreck ; and by their united efforts, the raft, with every surviving individual on board, had been saved.

“ What cheer, my lady ? ” said that brave fellow, addressing himself to Alexena, as he wiped away the big tear of joy that had forced its way to his

“cabin lights,” as he called them.—
“What cheer?—it was a rough gale, do ye see; but as it is over, think of smooth seas; the harbour of safety is found; for, if I am not out in my reckoning, Hollywood castle is within half a league.”

“Heaven be praised for its numberless mercies!” our heroine fervently replied, “and once more, Williams, receive my thanks, for a life so often saved; I have not strength to utter what my heart dictates; but, believe me, I am grateful—very grateful.”

“Bill could not hear this effusion of gratitude without a pleasing pain; and, with a heart almost bursting with joy, he hastened to mingle with the dripping group, who were shivering on the strand.

On his approach, they surrounded him, and, in the warmest terms, returned thanks; but Williams could not hear them with patience. “No more of your white-lined chamber talk,” he cried, “or you will sink this crazy

brain of mine in the gulph of madness ; set your rigging to rights, and steer for the port of Hollywood, where we may refit and take in provisions, of which our bread-rooms are much in need.”

Rourke recognised the coast the moment he had heard the observation of Williams, and as soon as he perceived his lord and lady were perfectly safe, almost flew across the country, and, notwithstanding his recent fatigue, returned in less than half an hour, accompanied by every domestic about the castle, with horses, litters, and refreshments ; and as soon as our shipwrecked travellers had partaken of the latter, the ladies were removed, with all possible haste, to the cheering hearths of Hollywood, where they were attended with all the care and hospitality which their situation so much required.

Mrs. Hastings, once more under that brother's roof, where she had for so many years presided as mistress, soon regained her wonted health, and by

her cordial and endearing kindnesses, restored the almost shattered frames of her female friends.

Both Zorayda and Lucinda were extremely delicate, and had not great care been taken, they could not have survived the late hardships; but our heroine, whose constitution was not altogether so weak, soon recovered, and enlivened her doating Mortimer, by her smiles, and her most affectionate uncle, Sir Edmond, who not only loved her with all the fondness of a parent, but at his decease, resolved to bequeath her the chief part of his property.

Virginia, ever gay, soon forgot that land in which she had suffered but too much unhappiness, and was rejoiced when Don Vasquez completed the purchase of an estate adjoining Castle Dashville, the seat of her beloved friend, Alexena.

Clarissa, and her Selib, had apartments in Hollywood, until such time as they could procure a suitable residence.

and Don Miguel and his Zorayda resided with Lord Mortimer; while Don Raphiel, ever eccentric, retired to a beautiful cottage, a quarter of a mile from his lordship's mansion, which he fitted up with infinite taste, and where he occasionally invited his friends to witness his happiness with Isabella, who always found him a kind and attentive husband.

Velasco, now in England, forgot the prejudices which he had nourished, and wondered how he could have entertained them. His Louisa was the best of wives—the most affectionate of mothers, and in her endearing society he spent the remainder of a long life, in ease, comfort, and affluence.

Antonio, the beloved brother of our heroine, resided on a neighbouring estate, where he was adored by his tenantry and dependants. He resembled his beautiful sister in all the good qualities which enrich the human heart, and none were more deservedly beloved than he and his Eveline.

Henri Bolerno, shortly after his return, married Miss Dashfort, a fine blooming girl, who we have slightly noticed in our first pages, and with her he enjoyed a splendid fortune, to which she added not only an excellent disposition, but many brilliant accomplishments; so that he was not the least fortunate.

Bernardo passed the remainder of his days in Hollywood, where he was both esteemed and respected, and lived many years to enjoy the society of his grateful friends, who conceived they could never sufficiently reward a person to whom they were so deeply indebted.

Zelo still continued with Don Miguel as his confessor, and was looked up to by all as a father; the old blessed him, and the young sought the wisdom of his counsels; none ever enjoyed more respect, more filial love, than this good man, this kind priest; and none more richly deserved it.

Mrs. Hastings was, about this period,

turned of forty ; but a much prettier woman than most females of her age ; and Mr. Jones having, for many years, expressed the warmest attachment, Sir Edmond assented to their union, as he wished to see this dear sister happy. Few men were more respectably connected than Mr. Jones ; his livings were very handsome, with a disposition and manners unexceptionable. He had also passed the heyday of youth, and was, therefore, both likely to enjoy, as well as value, the society of such a woman as Mrs. Hastings, to whom he was soon after united. During the summer months, the parsonage was their residence ; in winter, the castle, where they were always welcomed by their generous and hospitable brother,

Albert, in a few months after his return, was married to Betsy ; but still continued in his lord's service, being promoted to the respectable situation of land steward.

Tom must not be forgotten ; he did

not long remain a bachelor ; for having written to Biddy's father, that his finances were such as must even meet the approbation of a 'squire, the prudent old man accompanied his rosy-cheeked daughter to England, where she soon after became Mrs. Rourke, to the mutual joy of all those interested.

Old Margaret was appointed house-keeper at Dashville, where she had reason to bless the hour in which our heroine was imprisoned in the castle of Santa Marco.

Henriquez led Annette, a pretty French girl, an attendant of Zorayda's, to Hymen's altar, where Zelo bestowed the nuptial blessing, and immediately after the ceremony, Don Miguel made this worthy couple a present of five hundred crowns, with which they intended to purchase a farm, if heaven blessed them with a family ; if not, they resolved to pass the remainder of their lives under the same roof with their munificent benefactors.

CHAP. VIII.

“ ——— Should we be taking leave

As long a term as yet we have to live,

The lothness to depart would grow : Adieu !

Cym.

BEFORE we conclude these pages, it may be satisfactory to explain several particulars connected with our story ; we shall, therefore, request our readers to return with us to the castle of Santa Marco.

It must have appeared rather extraordinary how the good Zelo, who we first introduced in the ruinous chapel near Siguenca, should have found his way to the cave of Carracci the robber, and as he is very little known, it may not be uninteresting to give a short sketch of his life.—

He was the second son of an eminent statesman, and received his education in the principal university of Salamanca, where he remained until he had

attained his twenty-first year. Being handsome in his person, elegant in his address, and the only son of a minister high in power, he was much esteemed by the chief nobility of the city, and became a vast favourite with the ladies, among whom he had already selected one who he hoped to make his wife. Her father, Don Pablo Bisalco, moved in the first circles, was extremely rich, but unfortunately, more ambitious. This was a family misfortune; for Joseph, his brother, who enjoyed high dignities in the church, was still more aspiring; and his vast possessions were not only insufficient to satisfy him, but made him anxious to amass more, so that in a little time he looked forward to the mitre of Grenada, which was then on the head of the most implacable, the most cruel, and most powerful priest in Spain. But these mighty obstacles were either unhappily overlooked, or only served to stimulate the ambitious prelate, and his still more

ambitious brother. The consequence was, they, with several other misguided clergy, entered into a combination and conspiracy to overthrow the archbishop, by adducing proof of acts which would criminate him; or, if this failed, to consign him to the stiletto of an assassin.

During the period of these traitorous conferences, which were held in the house of Don Pablo, Angelina, the youngest and most beautiful of his daughters, discovered the plot, and remonstrated with her father on what was likely to be the consequence. She represented the greatness of the danger, and of the crime—besought him to give up such a wild chimera—proved the folly, and the destruction that must inevitably ensue, should their design transpire; but her every argument was useless, the misguided Pablo resolved to persevere; and after extorting a most solemn oath of secrecy from this his virtuous, beauteous daughter, dismissed

her. Many weeks passed away without any particular occurrence having intervened to disturb the general tranquillity ; during which time, preparations were made for Zelo's nuptials with the beloved of his heart ; his father having highly approved of the connection he was about to form, while Don Pablo conceived this intended marriage to be the most fortunate of events, as it would secure the interest of the prime minister. Thus influenced, the latter increased the joys of the lovers, by appointing an early day for the consummation of their union ; having determined, immediately after, to disclose the entire plan, then almost ripe for execution, to Don Francisco, Zelo's father, and to be guided by his advice ; but inexorable fate had decreed far otherwise ; for the night of the day preceding that fixed on for this marriage, the lovers, and every individual in Don Pablo's mansion, were alarmed by the inquisitorial troops, who had

surrounded it, and thus rendered their escape impossible. On admission being denied, the doors were broken open, and all within them made prisoners. Conveyances were already prepared, and at the dismal hour of midnight, Don Pablo and his lady, Angelina, with her two sisters, Marcella and Selina, their uncle Joseph, and several domestics, were obliged to set out for the inquisitorial dungeons of Grenada, where they arrived after a most fatiguing journey, not being suffered to rest for more than an hour at a time on the road.

The cause of this misfortune was, want of proper discretion on the part of the conspirators, who foolishly confided their secret to the keeping of a servant, and the hope of an immense reward induced him to betray them; but he was disappointed, and fell a victim to his own treachery; for on seeing his master chained to a rock, in a noisome cell, he repented, and on his knees

begged pardon for the irretrievable ruin he had brought upon his house. The wretched Pablo could scarce believe the evidence of his senses, as he had always treated this domestic with particular kindness, having brought him up in the family from his early youth ; but finding reproaches useless, he entreated this miserable dupe of villany to inform him, what was the extent of the information he had given. The now repentant Juan instantly gave a true detail, and his unfortunate master had the satisfaction to find many of his most inestimable friends had escaped unsuspected. This cast a transient gleam of comfort round his dark dungeon, yet even this was momentary, for the former had scarce concluded, before several familiars rushed into the cell, and dragged him before the tribunal, who instantly ordered him to be impaled, for daring to disclose secrets which he was bound to withhold, even

from his confessor, without having first obtained their liberty to disclose them.

Thus perished Juan, the most worthless of traitors ; he had stung the hand which fed him, and was deservedly crushed.

He had been sent to induce his master to make further discoveries, whose information was to be received as a ransom for his forfeited life, and that of his family ; but unfortunately for himself, he disregarded the cautions which had been previously given, and betrayed his diabolical employers.

In his informations, he stated, that one of Don Pablo's daughters was acquainted with the names, rank, and residences of all the conspirators, but which of the ladies he could not tell ; yet supposed Angelina to be the person, as she was deservedly her father's favourite.

Of this deposition, the archbishop resolved to avail himself, and tried every means by which he was likely to extort

confession from her, the torture excepted; but on finding all his efforts unsuccessful, he ordered her and her family to be executed.

On the dreadful night of the performance of this heart-rending tragedy, the miserable Pablo, his wife and daughters, with Joseph and Zelo, were conveyed into a subterranean hall, where a kind of low stage or platform was erected, on which a wheel and several narrow tables were already placed. In front there was a number of iron chairs, fastened to the stone floor, and in four of these, Donna Besalco, and her three lovely daughters were chained; their feet and hands were confined in such a manner, as rendered it impossible to make the slightest motion with either, while a kind of steel clasps confined the shoulders, so that their heads alone were at liberty, and Zelo was held by two familiars at a distance, to be a witness to the succeeding scene of horrors.

Perez, the archbishop, now appeared, and in a speech of considerable length, exhorted Pablo to discover his accomplices, promising in the most solemn manner to spare him and his family; but the father in reply, with a solemnity most awful, denounced his curse on that child of his, who would even in torments betray their friends. “You would not relieve yourselves, my children,” he said, “for the moment your executioners have drained the last particle of information, they will remorselessly sentence you to a death of agony; be you therefore steady, and die deserving of a father’s last blessing.” This fatal command shook the soul of Zelo; he knew Angelina would suffer ten thousand tortures, rather than disobey this dying injunction, and he then determined to perish also, for without her, the world was a dreary blank, not worth enjoying.

When Perez found his exhortation

vain, he ordered Pablo and Joseph to be broken on the wheel, in the presence of their distracted family, and which was instantly done. This dreadful implement of torture came down several times on the limbs, back, and ribs of the wretched sufferers, while their shrieks pierced the hearts of all present, except the females, who fortunately were insensible, though the inquisitors used every restorative, in order to inflict exquisite misery, but happily without effect, and both Pablo and Joseph passed into eternity, ere they awakened to behold their mutilated bodies, which were stretched on tables, covered with white linen, but whose heads were exhibited on spears in front of the platform. A bell at this moment rung a dead and heavy peal, which Perez no sooner heard, than he hastened from the execution chamber; but before he retired, ordered the heads of Donna Besalco, and her two eldest daughters,

to be struck off, after they should receive four blows from the wheel.*

The moment this demon retired, the executioners, with the consent of the inquisitors present, resolved, their victims should suffer decapitation first, and be broken on the wheel afterwards. This merciful determination was scarce assented to, ere it was carried into effect. The first who fell, was the donna herself, whose head was struck off at a blow ; the next Marcélla, who eagerly stretched her snowy neck to receive the fatal stroke, and then, with a sigh, expired. Selina saw her sister die, and with a resignation, unequalled except by saints, submitted to the executioner, who gazed for an instant on her lovely trembling form, then in a low murmur said, “ Lady, you are to be happy, and a moment’s pain over, you enjoy everlasting peace.” He then removed the

* This story is founded on facts, and those persons were actually executed as herein described.

gauze which covered her neck, and as it dropped from her heaving bosom, she blushed deeply ; it was the last token of expiring modesty ; with it the sabre fell, and her spirit ascended into heaven.

No orders had been given for the execution of Angelina, and the inquisitors were consulting, whether they should or should not order her to be treated as her sisters, when the archbishop entered, and put an end to their deliberations, by commanding his prisoner to be stretched on the rack. Zelo now gave a wild cry of horror, and struggled to be free ; having heretofore been a benumbed spectator of the wanton slaughter ; but sentence had not then been passed on Angelina. The familiars were too strong, and held fast, yet his emotion did not fail to attract the notice of the prelate, who recognised him as her lover, and, therefore, resolved to try how far it was possible to work on her feelings. Having first commanded her to be unbound, Perez solemnly

promised to bestow the entire of her father's large possessions, together with the hand of Zelo, if she made a full confession ; and disclose, without reserve, the names of those concerned in the plot. This she called on heaven to witness she would never do, and then her tormentor ordered the torture. In a short time she was fastened on the rack, and the signal being given, her shoulders were drawn from their sockets at the first jirk, but her piteous shrieks having become unsufferable, one of the executioners, being much more merciful than her judge, drew a long knife from his bosom, and, unperceived by any person present, cut the ropes of the machine. Immediately after, the archbishop put the question a second time, and on finding she was still proof against his threats, ordered the torture to be repeated. Again the horrid implement was applied, but failed in its action, and the executioner announced it was useless, with a pleasure

which he never before had felt. Enraged at this supposed accident, and irritated by her patient suffering, the inhuman prelate wound the broken rope round his arm, and ere he strained it, demanded his victim's answer.

“ Oh, heaven ! in thy mercy, take me to thy peace, and forgive this man ! ” was the fervent prayer of Angelina, as she laid down her head on the scaffold ; this, and this only, was her reply ; but it was more than sufficient to irritate her brutal judge, who now jerked the cord with such violence, as inflicted the most excruciating pains. “ Oh ! infernal monster ! accursed, inhuman dog ! ” exclaimed Sanguini,*—“ this to thy remorseless heart ; and let it be a pass to thy kindred fiends ! ” he said, and plunged his poisoned stiletto into the bosom of Perez, and laid him dead at his feet.

An exclamation of horror and surprise now rung through the cavern ;

* One of the executioners.

but the executioner, brandishing his bloody weapon, commanded silence, and, threatening, swore to immolate the first who should dare to move; then, lowering his voice, he addressed Angelina—"Lovely and unfortunate lady, the moments are precious; therefore, let me be quick. You are doomed to unheard of misery; one way only remains to save you, which is, by releasing your spirit, before those demons in human form can wreck its beauteous habitation. Oh! before you die, promise, that when you reach Paradise, you will hold forth your hands, and beseech that Redeemer who suffered for us all, to save my soul."

"My friend, I will, if I shall attain such immeasurable joys."

"'Tis enough; then, thus we defy the malice of our earthly, vain, inhuman judges," he said, and stabbed her to the heart; then himself, and expired on her lifeless form. Her eye was fixed on Zelo's, as she received the

deadly blow, and it spoke unutterable love; it recalled him from stupid inaction, to a sense of that misery which shortly after ended in madness. How long he might have remained under the influence of that dreadful distemper, he could not form an idea; but when reason resumed her throne, he was pardoned, and set at liberty. His peace of mind, however, was irretrievably ruined, and, in a state of pitiable despondency, he sought the mansion of his father; but—

“ When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions ;”—

For his parents had both died of a broken heart, leaving him a large fortune, in case he should ever claim it; if not, it was to be distributed among the religious, to secure the repose of his soul.

When Zelo found that a few months had been sufficient to overthrow his every hope of happiness in this world,

he retired into an obscure monastery of Benedictine monks, where he resolved to spend the remainder of his miserable existence; but time and religion softened his sorrows, and at an early period of his life, he was induced to become Don Miguel's tutor, which task he performed with infinite credit to himself, as well as to his pupil. He was almost sixty before he took the cowl, which was many years after he had retired into the monastery.

Immediately after the combat in the chapel, he hastened to acquaint Don Miguel, (who he had long known as Belzo Carracci,) with the particulars of that event, and to beg his interference; for the beauty of our heroine had interested his every feeling, particularly, when he conceived she bore a striking likeness to his lost Angelina. Carracci promised his assistance, and used every exertion to liberate Lord Mortimer; and had it not been for the threatening letters with which he terrified both the

prior and abbess, Alexena would have fallen a victim to the unprecedented cruelty of the latter.

Father Zelo had been many months in Hollywood, before he was induced to relate this, the story of his life; but the earnest request of Don Miguel prevailed, and one evening when he was surrounded by every individual who had accompanied him from Spain, (the servants and sailors excepted,) he gave this melancholy relation of his woes.

The moment he had finished, Velasco fell on his knees, and besought his blessing, and called on Lady Mortimer to follow his example.—“Oh! my sister,” he cried, “this is our uncle Don Diego, long since supposed to be numbered with the dead; this is he who bequeathed to us his large possessions, and is the only brother of our regretted father.”

Zelo, now Don Diego, clasped each alternatively to his heart, while he said,

“My children, I did not conceive it prudent to disclose our relationship sooner, as my story, added to your other griefs, would have been too much, and you are now only to think of it as a tale told for your amusement; yet, alas! it is too true; however, I praise heaven, that I have the comfort of beholding my only surviving relatives worthy of empires, and that my grey hairs shall sink into the grave in peace.”

Velasco now insisted on restoring his uncle's fortune, or the value, as it had been converted into money; but the kind old man, with a smile, said, “My dear boy, what should I do with it?—No! no!—keep it, and may heaven add innumerable blessings. I shall live with you, Mortimer, and Miguel, alternatively, and have no doubt, but I shall meet with as much attention, as if I had the wealth of kingdoms to bestow.”

It is impossible to express the felicity of all, on this unexpected recognition, as neither Velasco or our

heroine had ever seen this beloved relative in the life-time of their parents, though they had often heard a few particulars of his melancholy fate.

When those happy friends had somewhat recovered from the agitation which this joyful event had excited, they spent the greater part of the night in the repetition of misfortunes past ; and in those long-winded stories it appeared, that Don Diego had procured the horrible robes in which the kind Williams had frightened Don Philip, the night he had entered Alexena's chamber, for the purpose of assassinating Louisa.

The scull which dashed the bowl from our heroine's hand, in the dungeons of Santa Marco, was thrown by Velasco, who was at that time deranged, and the voice which spoke from the cavern's roof, commanding her not to taste of the olio, was one of the ruffianly band of Acasto, who Montano had placed there for the purpose of increasing her misery.

The exclamation of, ‘ Heaven have mercy,’ which Lord Mortimer had heard in the cemetery of the castle, when wandering through it with Don Miguel, and which seemed to issue from one of the coffins, was repeated by Mrs. Hastings, who was at that time confined in a dungeon underneath it, and often expressed her grief and misery in prayers, or sudden exclamations, such as that which his lordship had overheard.

We should suppose it is unnecessary to say that the placards which were at different times fastened to the body of Hugo, were either procured by Don Selib or Williams ; and that the groan overheard by the monk in one of the pillars in the chapel, was uttered by the former to terrify that villain.

Henriquez was the guide who accompanied the sham Monfrane, when Lord Mortimer was conducted through the Pyrenees, and who had beds and entertainment provided for his lordship.

Don Miguel, previous to his marriage, had the unfortunate Cerasco and Geraldine interred in one grave, over whom he raised a plain but handsome tomb, with an inscription, descriptive of their love and misfortunes.

Many of the banditti perished in the explosion of the castle; but the greater number had, antecedent to that misfortune, retired to their respective homes, situated in different provinces, and there settled comfortably, which they were enabled to do, by the munificent provision made for them by their generous chieftain.

The traveller can yet recognise part of the old moss-covered towers and buttresses of Santa Marco, once famous for the loves of Alexena and her Mortimer, but now the retreat of the wolf and the owl, who nightly shriek over the ruins, in concert with the shades of Montano, and his partners in iniquity, Hugo and Torquo.

Dashville, the beautiful residence of Lord Mortimer and his Alexena, is now the abode of love and domestic happiness, where the good and virtuous daily meet to witness each other's felicity; where Zelo blesses the children of our heroine, and guides them steadily through that narrow path, to the attainment of those treasures, "which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal."

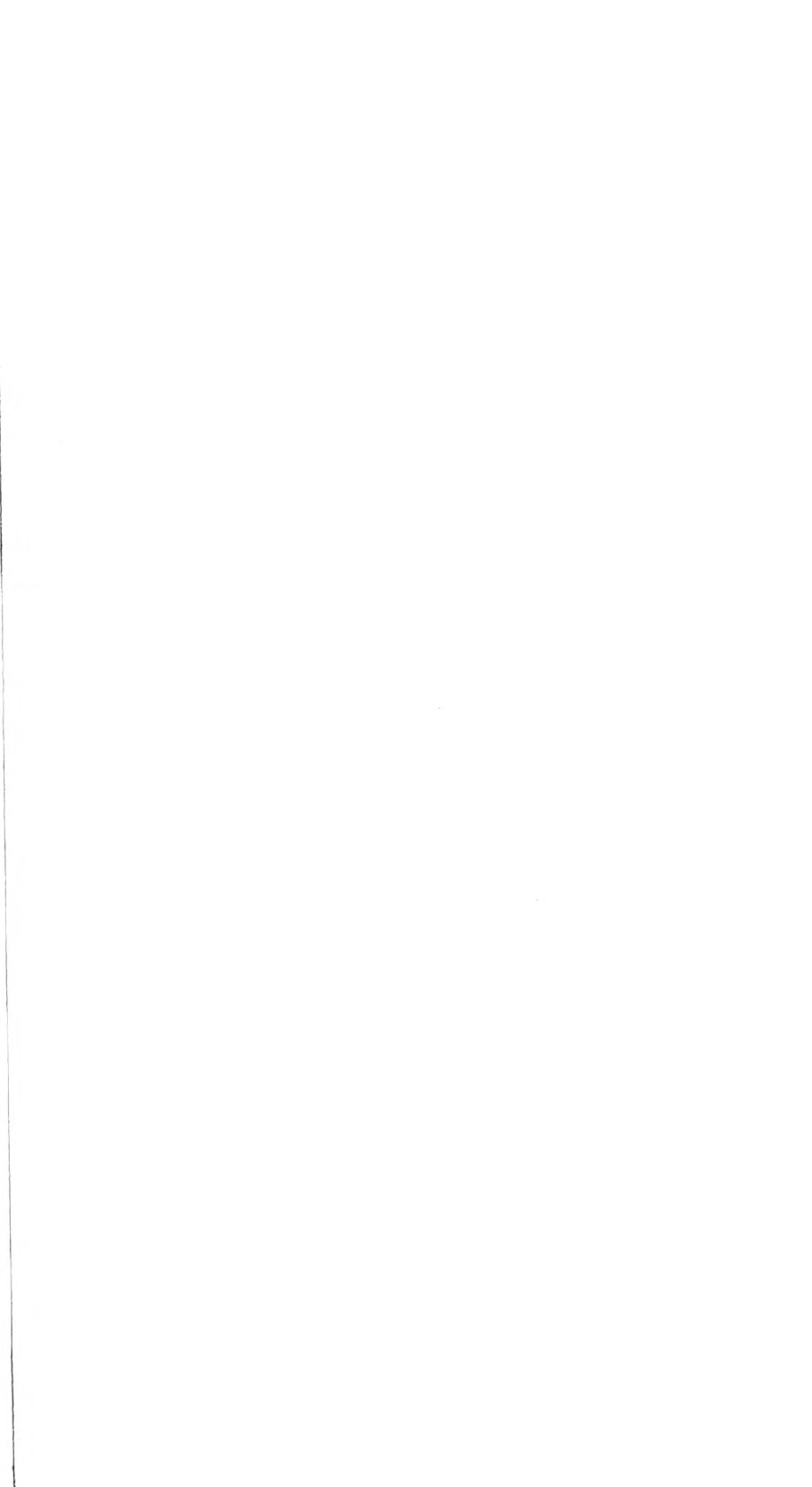
Our pen is now worn, and we anxiously hope, not altogether without attaining the desired object, which was to shew, that though the wicked may sometimes prevail, and afflict the just, their power is weak as it is worthless, and eventually ends in disgrace and punishment; and that the virtuous, though oppressed by the villany of designing men, shall, by patience and courage, overcome misfortune.

Now, if the youthful hand that has written this tale, has, in this first attempt, rendered one reader pleasure,

by dispelling the gloom of half an hour's solitude, or ameliorating the pains of sickness, he shall not only conceive he has succeeded, but feel himself amply rewarded.

FINIS.





UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 037331052